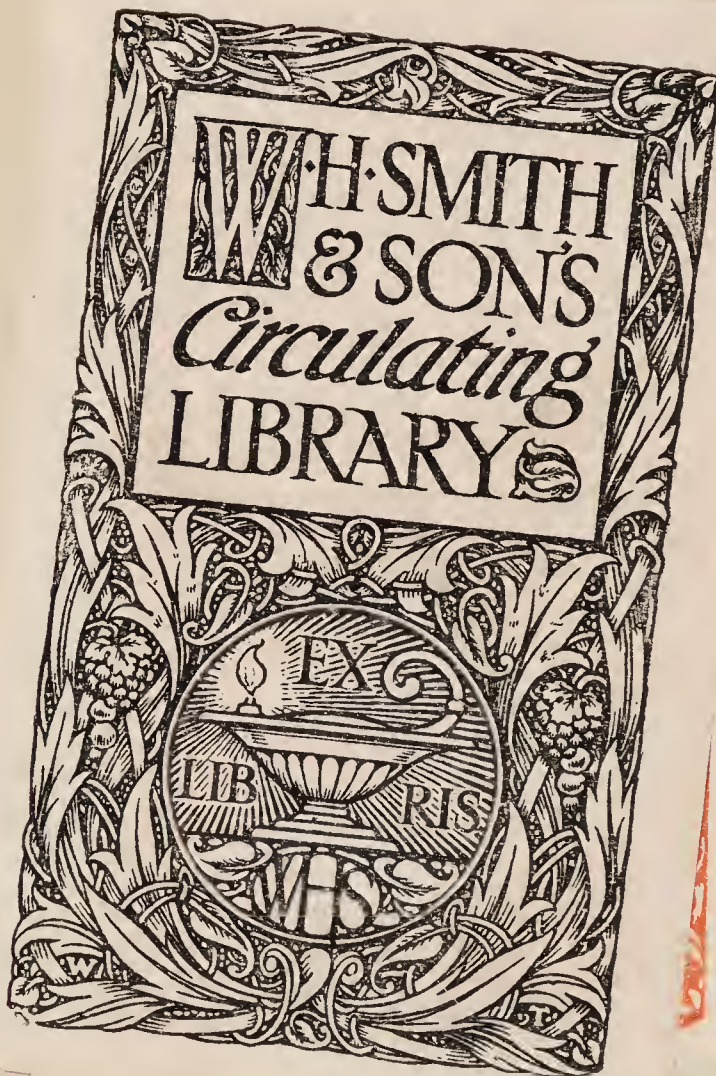


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THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM



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ST. UBALDESCA.

From an Italian Portrait at St. John's Gate.

The Order of St. John of Jerusalem

(PAST AND PRESENT)

By

ROSE G. KINGSLEY

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Author of "A History of French Art," "Eversley Gardens and Others,"
"In the Rhone Country," etc.



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P R E F A C E

ALTHOUGH some hundreds of books in many languages have been written about the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, I have been impelled, in venturing to add one more to the number, by the desire at this moment when its noble work is so widespread, to make it better known to English-speaking peoples, who, even when working for it, seem to be little aware of its actual history.

And in my task I have received such generous aid and encouragement, that if it proves of interest, it will be due far more to those who have helped me than to any effort of my own.

My warmest thanks are due to Lady Grosvenor, who first introduced me to St. John's Gate, where I have since spent so many happy days of work ; and who, moreover, has most kindly allowed me the use of her charming colour-print of St. Ubaldesca. To Lady Jekyll, who has bestowed hours of her valuable time in showing me every detail of her splendid work at the Warehouse in St. John's Square. To the Rector, the Rev. T. C. Elsdon, who first showed me the church and the crypt. To W. R. Edwards, Esq., O.B.E., Knight of Grace and Secretary to the Order, who has allowed me to quote his account of the Order

to-day. And to H. W. Fincham, Esquire of the Order, without whose generous and never-failing help and counsel this little book could never have been written. His own book has been my chief guide; and his generosity in allowing me to make copious quotations from it, and in giving me the use of six negatives of his admirable photographs, is a debt I can never repay.

ROSE G. KINGSLEY.

October 10th, 1918.

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THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDING OF THE ORDER

IN these days, when the White Cross of St. John with its eight points on the black ground, is seen everywhere beside the Red Cross of Geneva, it is strange how few among the general public realize that the Order of St. John of Jerusalem is the most ancient of all nursing Orders—an Order older than the Crusades. Or that the St. John Ambulance Association of 1877, and the St. John Ambulance Brigade of 1887, which taught First Aid to the Wounded in times of peace and have done such magnificent work in times of war, are but its very modern children.

For the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, commonly known as Knights Hospitallers, were the first of those various Orders of Chivalry founded in the 11th and 12th centuries, to be followed by the Knights Templars, the Teutonic Knights, and other bodies. These all disappeared in

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course of time. But the ancient Order of St. John of Jerusalem has lived on through many vicissitudes, until at this day its beneficent work for suffering humanity is on a scale far beyond all that could have been dreamt of, even ten years ago.

From the time that the Empress Helena founded the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem in the 3rd century, pilgrimages to the Holy Land became more and more frequent. The earliest description of a pilgrimage is of one in A.D. 333, from Bordighera to Jerusalem. In the 4th and 5th centuries they became very numerous; and so long as the Christian emperors of Constantinople maintained their rule over Palestine pilgrims were encouraged, while it is also evident that some sort of hospital existed for their benefit. Moreover, when the power of Islam swept over the Holy Land, and the Byzantine Empire in Asia crumbled before it, both the hospital and the pilgrimages were still tolerated; for the pilgrims brought considerable gain to the country. It must, however, be acknowledged that, during the many contests between the Caliphs of Bagdad and the Caliphs of Egypt for the sovereignty of the Holy Land, the unfortunate pilgrims were constantly plundered and often murdered, by one or other of their so-called protectors.

France, from very early times, was specially interested in the Holy Land. And during the more peaceful sway of Haroun al Raschid, Charle-

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magne sent two embassies to him. The first envoys in A.D. 797 were Lanfred, Sigismund and Isaac, who came back to Charlemagne accompanied by Haroun's envoys, with an elephant and other presents. The second embassy succeeded in establishing a French protectorate over the Holy Places—much after the manner of that of the 18th century. Though the protectorate of the 9th century was far the most liberal, being extended to all Christians, whether Latin, Greek, Syrian or Georgian. And this lasted until the middle of the 9th century; when Charlemagne's feeble successors gradually allowed it to lapse into the hands of the Byzantine Emperors.

A very considerable trade had always existed between Western Europe and the Levant. And “some of these pilgrims combined the profits of commerce with their holier object, and those who were thus able to establish relations with the rulers of the neighbouring provinces had it often in their power to befriend their less fortunate brethren.”*

Among these pilgrim traders, the Merchants of Amalfi obtained permission to build a hospital at Jerusalem for the use of sick and poor Latin pilgrims. The Mohammedan Governor of the city assigned a site to these excellent men, close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and outside the walls, in order to avoid friction with the Mussulmans. Here they erected a church dedi-

* Porter.

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cated to the Virgin, called Sta. Maria ad Latinos, to distinguish it from the other existing Greek churches—the church being served by Benedictine monks. This work was finished between A.D. 1014–1023, according to a charter given for the re-endowment of the church and monastery by Melek Muzaffer in 1023*. Furthermore, between this time and the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099, two hospitals were built for pilgrims, one for men, the other for women. That for women was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene. The other to St. John Eleemon, or the Almoner. This name was changed later—the date is uncertain—to St. John Baptist. And as the establishment of the pious Merchants of Amalfi grew and prospered, many pilgrims stayed on in Jerusalem, and, without any religious profession, devoted themselves to the work of the hospitals.

“Grateful pilgrims on their return spread far and wide the reputation of the Jerusalem hospitals, so that contributions flowed in from every quarter, and their utility was greatly extended. Such was the establishment from which the Order of St. John eventually sprung; and it was from this fraternity that a body of men descended, who for centuries continued a terror to the infidel, and the main bulwark of Christendom in the East.”†

This fraternity called themselves the Brothers

* This charter and date were certified by Captain Conder, R.E., of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The usual date being given as A.D. 1048.

† Porter.

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of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. They eventually became independent of the Benedictines, to which Order they had hitherto been attached; and “under the name of Hospitallers constituted a religious order having a life patron, church and hospitals of their own.”* The first head of the Brotherhood, known as the Rector, was Brother Gerard, who is described in Vertot’s “Knights of Malta” as “Fondateur de l’Ordre de St. Jean de Jerusalem. 1090.” Brother Gerard died in 1119–20; and his remains were brought from the Holy Land and preserved at Manosque in Provence, until the Revolution. The humerus and one rib were given by the Commandeur de Manosque—then a commandery of the Order—on November 20th, 1727, to the church of Martigues. And M. Le Roulx states they still exist in that remote town, where the Etangs de Berre and de Bouc meet. While a silver head by the great sculptor Puget, which formed the reliquary, is preserved in the Mairie of Manosque.

Many fabulous legends grew up in the Middle Ages round the memory of *le Bienheureux Gerard*. But Dugdale gives one which sounds as if it might be true. He tells how, that when the city was possessed by the Saracens, “Gerardus, a devout servant of God, lived here, and served the poor in like manner. Who at such times as Jerusalem was besieg’d by Godfrey de Bullen, and the Christian Pilgrims, and a great famine being in the Christian Camp, was accustomed to go upon the

* Le Roulx, p. 38.

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Walls and throw over Loaves, which he carried secretly about him for that purpose, as if he were eager in throwing Stones against the Besiegers.”

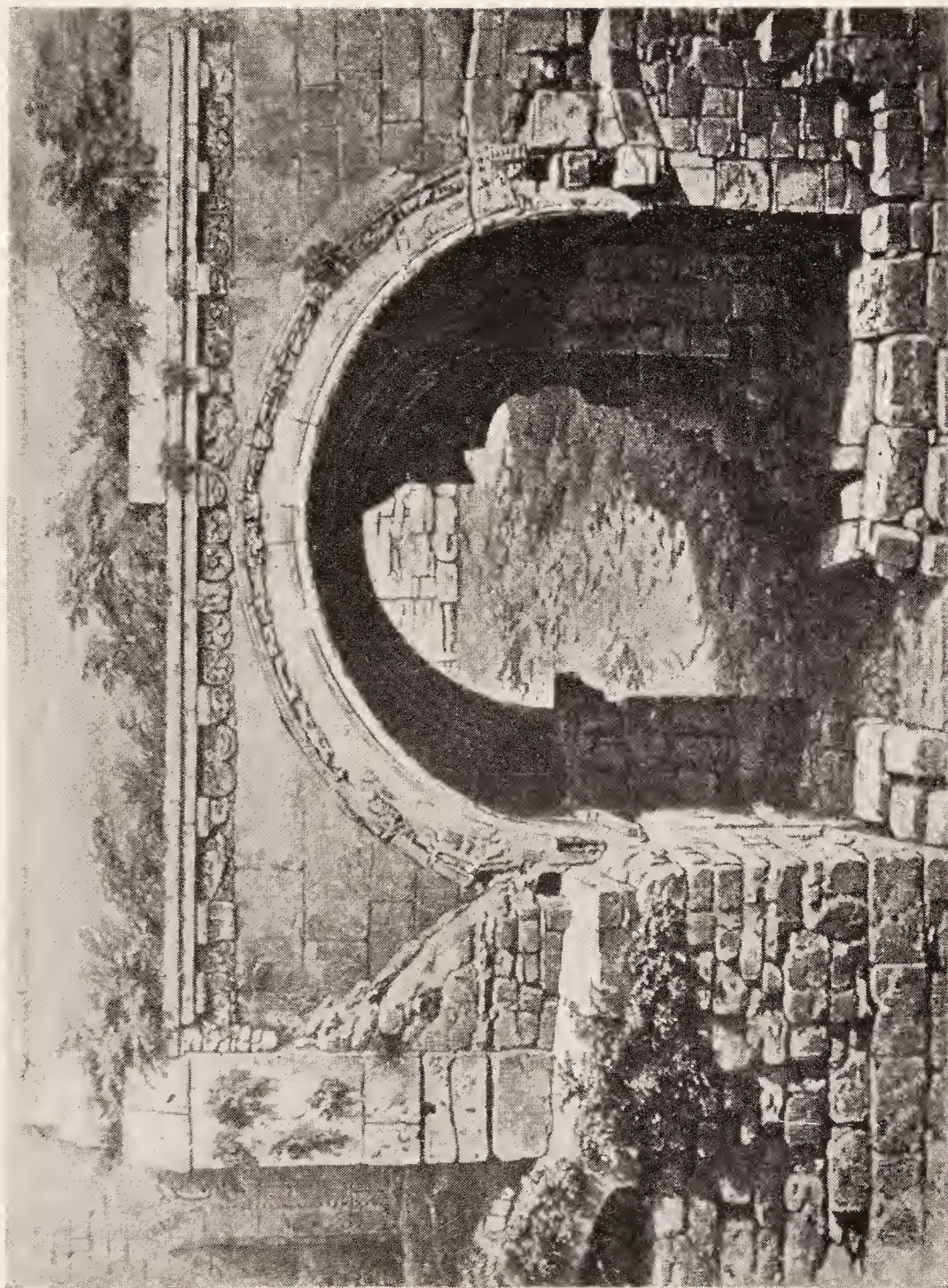
So important had the Brotherhood become, that they now constituted themselves an Order of Military Knights for the protection of pilgrims, founding hospitals and building castles along the various pilgrims' ways to the Holy City.

The buildings of the Hospital of the Order of St. John covered a large space of ground in Jerusalem, close, as already stated, to the Holy Sepulchre. Thanks to the inestimable services of the Palestine Exploration Fund, some just idea of their extent and uses may be gathered from the excellent plan made in 1902.

The whole establishment was known as the Hospital of St. John. But a special part formed the real hospital in its twofold uses: firstly, as a house for pilgrims, and, secondly, for lodging and nursing the sick. Within its walls close to the Holy sites, the Order built the three churches, convents and a palace for their own residence. And as all the buildings were erected about the same time, they were in one style, “massive, with square piers supporting vaults and arches. The best specimen now to be seen is the row of strong arches in David Street. The whole area formed one building, though consisting of various parts and often divided by narrow lanes, containing some open but small courts for light and air.”*

The excavations show that the great hall had

* Palestine Exploration Fund, 1902.



[Pierrotti.]

Gateway of the ancient Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem.

[To face p. 16.]



Rhodes of the 'Knights.

[Farochon,

THE FOUNDING OF THE ORDER

three rows of piers, which are still standing, seven in each row, making with those connected with the walls forty-eight in all, the length of the hall being 280 feet, width 120 feet, and the inside of the arches about 18 feet in height.

The vast number of cisterns found all over the site, even under the churches, are surprising at first sight. But they were needed for such a mass of people—the sick alone numbering many hundreds—besides the constant stream of pilgrims who sought hospitality and safety within the walls of the Hospital of St. John.

One of the earliest accounts of the Hospital is that of John of Wurzburg, about A.D. 1160. He says: "Over against the Church of the Holy Sepulchre . . . towards the south is a beautiful church, built in honour of John the Baptist, annexed to which is a hospital where in various rooms is collected together an enormous multitude of sick people, both men and women, who are tended and restored to health daily at very great expense."

A few years later another writer says of the church and hospital: "No one can credibly believe how beautiful its buildings are." While in 1322, delightful Sir John Mandeville described the great Hospital of St John. ". . . In it are one hundred and twenty-four pillars of stone, and in the walls of the house, besides the number aforesaid, there are fifty-four pillars that support the house. From that hospital going towards the east is a very fair church, which is called Our Lady the Great, and

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after it another church very near, called Our Lady the Latin.”

The apse of Sta. Maria Maggiore, and the chief entrance gate—known as St. John’s Gate, Muristan, —still exist. For after the Knights Hospitallers were driven out of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187, the hospital was turned into a mad house or Muristan.*

St. John’s Gate consists of a deeply recessed gateway, formed by a large round arch, comprising two smaller arches. “The spandril between the two was formerly adorned with sculpture, now nearly all gone. The arches rest on one side on a central pillar, and at the other on an entablature reaching from the small side columns to the portal. . . . The main arch rests on a buttress adjoining the portal. Around this arch runs a broad sculptured frieze representing the months . . . in the centre the sun, with a superscription (Sol), represented by a half figure holding a disc over its head. Near it is the moon (Luna), a female figure with a crescent. The cornice above is adorned with medallions representing leaves, griffins, etc.”†

The beautiful lithograph drawings of Pierrotti, in 1860, with descriptive text by the late Professor Bonney, show the Gateway; and behind it may be seen part of the ruins of Sta. Maria Maggiore, with the frame of half a broken window and a line

* As these words were written the news comes that Jerusalem after 730 years is to-day safe in the hands of British, French, Italian and Indian troops. December 11th, 1917.

† Porter.

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of dog-tooth moulding round it. Another print shows the apse of the church as it was before restoration. While other more modern drawings and photographs show the church when it was restored by Germany and opened by the Emperor William, then Crown Prince ; the lofty tower being built in the worst style of modern German architecture, and forming an incongruous blot among the surrounding buildings.

When the Mohammedan Caliphs had ruled in Palestine for four centuries, they were in their turn overpowered by a fierce horde of barbarians, the Turcomans, from the wild regions of the Caspian Sea ; and the Holy Land now fell into their savage hands. If the Christians had suffered under Mohammedan tyranny and extortion, their fate was now far worse. The tribute they had always been bound to pay for the privilege of visiting Jerusalem was enormously increased ; while they suffered every kind of atrocity, much as the Armenians in more recent days have suffered at the hands of the Turks. So that a journey to Jerusalem was one of the greatest possible peril ; and those who escaped its dangers brought back such tales of terror, that gradually a strong sense of horror or indignation was aroused throughout Europe.

The climax was reached in 1093, when Peter the Hermit, returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, determined to devote himself to the suppression of the cruelties he had witnessed. Armed with letters from the Greek Patriarch Simeon,

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and Gerard, Rector of the Hospital of St. John, he went to Rome and pleaded his cause in person with Pope Urban II. The religious enthusiasm of Europe was thus aroused to a pitch of frenzy ; vast armaments were assembled from all nations. And thus began that wonderful movement of the Crusades of the 11th and 12th centuries, as "the armed chivalry of Europe gradually collected on the plains before Constantinople, where they mustered a strength of 600,000 foot and 100,000 horse."*

When Godefroi de Bouillon captured Jerusalem on July 15th, 1099, the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem was already in full working order. Many of the Crusaders and rich pilgrims bestowed upon it their possessions in the various countries of Europe, from which they had come for the release of the Holy City from the infidel. And when in A.D. 1118, Raymond de Puy succeeded Brother Gerard, he took the title of Grand Master ; and with the sanction of Pope Pascal II. compiled rules for the Order.

It must be remembered that the knight of those days was the representative of the highest attainable civilization, sanctioned, moreover, by the Church. When he came to man's estate and received the dignity of knighthood, he fasted and prayed, confessed his sins, received Holy Communion, and in the church itself was girded with his sword and his spurs buckled on. While some noble

* Porter.

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knight, giving him the accolade, admitted him to the rank of knight when he had solemnly sworn to be the champion of God and of women, to speak the truth, to succour the distressed, to maintain the right, to be courteous and brave. “To fight in defence of his religion was not only a duty, it was also an inestimable privilege. He had been taught that pardon for his sins was to be shown by a display of martial zeal on behalf of his faith, and that the shedding of his blood in such a sacred cause would insure him an entry into the joys of Heaven.*

In its threefold character of tending the sick, succouring pious pilgrims, and defending the Holy City against the infidel, the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem became one of extreme importance and popularity. By the rules of the Order, the knights were divided into seven *Languest*† or divisions, representing the various countries to which they belonged, and in which their lands and revenues lay. These were Italy, Aragon, France, Provence, Auvergne, England and Germany. To these an eighth was added when the kingdom of Aragon was divided.

One of the first steps of the Chapter or Council under Raymond de Puy’s energetic government, “was to divide the Order into three classes, according to their rank and functions; the first class, which formed the aristocracy, were to be named knights of justice; the second, which included the

* Porter.

† “Tongues.”

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ecclesiastic branch, were called religious chaplains; and the third, or lower class, serving brothers.”* Only those who had already received the accolade of knighthood at secular hands could be admitted to the first class.

There were also religious dames of the Order, who had “branch establishments in France, Italy, Spain and England. The rules for their reception were similar to those for knights of justice, with the addition that proofs of noble descent were demanded of them.”†

The banner of the Order was a plain white cross on a red ground. A black robe with a white eight-pointed cross on the left breast, was the conventual habit of the knight. But when fighting, as they usually were—for our knights were a very warlike body—they wore a red tunic over their armour, with a large plain white cross on the front, like that upon the banner. Both these costumes are seen in the two portraits of the Italian knight, Alberto Arringhieri, by Pinturicchio in Siena Cathedral, of which there are reproductions in the Library at St. John’s Gate, and which Mr. Fincham, sub-librarian of the Order, has included in the excellent illustrations of his book.‡

The nursing sisters of the Order wore a red dress, with a black robe over it, bearing the eight-pointed white cross. But as a sign of mourning, after the loss of Rhodes in 1522, they gave up the red dress

* Porter.

† *Id.*

‡ “The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem,” 1915.
H. W. Fincham, Esq.

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for black. In the Chapter Hall at St. John's Gate, an old and charming picture may be seen of St. Ubaldesca, a sister of the Order of St. John, in her black habit over white, her black veil edged with a neatly pinched white border ; the eight-pointed white cross on her breast ; while she holds a red book and a little chafing-dish in her hands. She died at Pisa in 1206, and was canonized after her death for her miracles and her works of charity. But so great was the fame of her miracles, that in the course of three hundred years after her death her body was taken on many pilgrimages ; until finally the poor, gentle saint was laid to rest in the church of St. John in Malta, where she still reposes—special indulgences being granted to those who visit her tomb.

Another sister, Veronese, became famous about the same time for her devotion to the service of the Hospital. Her beauty, it is said, was only equalled by her virtue and modesty. So that when three young men, overcome by her charms, made undue advances towards her, they were struck dead before her, and only restored to life by her prayers. While among the brethren conspicuous for their devotion and sanctity, were Hugh of Genoa, Gerard Mecati, and Gerland of Poland.

The eight-pointed White Cross which is now to be seen all over London in conjunction with the Red Cross of Geneva, bears deep meanings under its simple form. And the signification of these

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outward forms is commemorated in a prayer, now in use in the Order for all who wear it.

“May we ever remember in our lives that its four arms symbolize the Christian virtues—Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude; that its points represent the eight Beatitudes which spring from the practice of the virtues; and that its whiteness is the emblem of that purity of life required in those who fight for the defence of the Christian Faith and live for the service of the poor and suffering.”

It was in 1187 that Saladin eventually defeated the Second Crusade, and drove the Crusaders out of Jerusalem. But although the Knights Hospitallers had proved themselves the most determined of his foes, he so respected their work for the sick and poor that he allowed them twelve months to settle the affairs of their hospital before they left. Though now driven out of Jerusalem, the knights of St. John—who settled for a time at Margat, building a church and hospital there—played so important a part in the famous siege of Acre, which Richard Cœur de Lion took after twenty-three months, that it became known as St. Jean d’Acre, as it is to this day.

Here at Acre they built a great hospital, even larger than the one they had abandoned in Jerusalem. And for over one hundred years Acre became the headquarters of the Order, their last and most important stronghold, and the metropolis of Christianity in the East. It was a noble

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town, with wide, regular streets, in strong contrast to the ordinary Oriental city, containing imposing public buildings and houses of marble or the finest cut stone, of equal heights and flat roofs, so that it was possible to walk about it without descending to the streets. It enjoyed the rare luxury of glass windows—some even of stained glass. A double enceinte rampart surrounded it, with many flanking towers to strengthen the walls, these being wide enough to allow two chariots to pass abreast on their summit. Silken canopies and awnings were stretched across the streets. And its wealth and luxury drew representatives from all nations to such a favoured spot.

“Such a congregation of varied races, and such a constant stream of wealth flowing through its midst, naturally engendered a vicious mode of life, and we find the city in these, its last days of Christian dominion, a scene of reckless turbulence and unbridled debauchery.”* It is therefore small wonder that, among the representatives of seventeen countries, speaking different languages, governed by different laws, and each occupying a separate part of the city, law and order should have become almost impossible.

Finally, outrages on Moslems in 1291 gave Sultan Mansour the opportunity he had long waited for, of expelling the Christians from Syria. He instantly demanded reparation, which the Grand Masters of the three Military Orders of St. John, the Templars and the Teutonic Knights, urgently

* Porter.

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desired to grant, knowing the peril of the situation. But their advice was rejected with scorn by their followers. An answer of defiance was sent. And the whole force of the Egyptian Empire set forth to crush this last stronghold of Christianity.

Though Mansour was poisoned by one of his generals on the march to Acre, his son Khalil vowed that his father's body should not be buried until Acre was captured. He pushed forward without delay, with an army, according to Arab historians, of 160,000 foot and 60,000 horse.

John de Villiers, Grand Master of the Order of St. John, and William de Beaujeu, Grand Master of the Templars, gallantly defended the city, aided by a small reinforcement brought by Henry de Lussignan, King of Cyprus. But after desperate fighting on both sides, Henry, under cover of night, basely deserted his allies, and with his followers sailed hastily for Cyprus. While the strength of the Knights, decimated as they were by wounds and disease, proved unequal to the hosts of besiegers, and the Saracens at length poured through the walls.

Beaujeu, the gallant Grand Master of the Templars, was killed on the last day of the siege. And all that remained for de Villiers was to rescue the remnant of the Knights from massacre. They managed to reach the shore, and embarked under cover of the archers on their galleys—"the sad remains of that proud fraternity, which had during so many years raised the White Cross as a barrier against the Moslem."*

* Porter.

CHAPTER II

THE SOJOURN IN CYPRUS

1291-1310

THE remnant of the Hospitallers on their arrival in Cyprus, were given the town of Limasol as their residence by the dastard Henry de Lusignan; and here they reestablished their convent without delay. Orders were sent to every Grand-Priory of the Order to send thither all members within their limits. And this command was obeyed with such enthusiasm, that in a short time the brotherhood was almost equal in strength to its former numbers. Money also poured in from Europe in abundance. So that the Order was quickly enabled to open its hospital and begin its charitable works again.

The chief house of the Order in Cyprus was the Castle of Kolossi. This castle is still in good preservation. And in 1915 "it was acquired by the English Order, not as an outpost of aggression, but as a memento of the time when the whole work of the Knights lay at the eastern end of the Mediterranean."* It closely resembles a solid

* Fincham.

THE SOJOURN IN CYPRUS

Norman keep of the usual type. Its sides are 75 feet long, 95 feet high, the walls being 10 feet thick. The basement is divided into three aisles; the ground floor consists of two large chambers. In the south-east angle a circular stair connects all the floors. While in the north angle a shaft descends to the well in the basement. And that a chapel or large hall must have adjoined the keep, is proved by foundations, and by traces on its north-west side of an arcade and columns, with an archivolt, etc.

The galleys of the Hospitallers which had brought them from Acre, were now used to protect and escort the many pilgrims who still, despite all difficulties and dangers, continued to visit the Holy Land. Devoting themselves to this object on the new element they had chosen for their work, the Knights rapidly showed the Saracen enemy that the White Cross flag was as much to be dreaded at sea as it had been on land. Their new fleets sailed to the various ports of Italy and the Adriatic, during the months of March and August, collecting bands of pilgrims, escorting them to Syria, and then taking them back to their destination.

Frequent encounters with the Saracens took place at sea. And the numerous Turkish prizes which soon filled the harbour of Cyprus, were the first fruits of that naval supremacy which eventually asserted itself on the waters of the Mediterranean. But the booty thus won, now became a serious temptation to the Knights, vowed as they were to lives of chastity and poverty. And their

THE SOJOURN IN CYPRUS

personal luxury and extravagance threatened at last to undermine the whole value of their service. To check this tendency to luxury and display, John de Villiers was forced to call two Chapters, which enacted that "no knight was henceforth to be allowed the possession of more than three horses, and all adornment of his equipments was once more strictly forbidden."* This severity at last checked extravagance. The prizes went to the treasury. And the Knights, now disciplined and in order as of old, made navigation comparatively secure for European commerce, to the great benefit of all nations, especially the Venetians.

The split between the Hospitallers and Templars now became acute. Both had fought finely at Acre for Christianity and the possession of their last outpost in the Holy Land. But while the Hospitallers devoted themselves to such splendid work against the Turks at sea, the Templars, after a brief stay at Cyprus "hurried westwards with unseemly haste, where, settling themselves in their various European preceptories, they gave way to unbridled luxury," which eventually led to their dissolution in 1315.

After the death of John de Villiers, in 1294, Odon de Pins, an aged and pious Provençal knight, succeeded him, far more fit to rule monks than warlike Hospitallers. These, tired of his inertia, at last petitioned the Pope to depose him. And William de Villaret, another Provençal, and prior of the famous Abbey of St. Gilles in the Camargue,

* Porter.

THE SOJOURN IN CYPRUS

was elected Grand-Master. A man of vigorous character and eager to serve his Order, de Villaret determined to find them some new and permanent home, where they should no longer be guests, subject to heavy taxation and many unjust exactions, but lords of their own land. His thoughts turned to Rhodes, once a dependence of the Emperors of Constantinople; but now ruled by governors who had gradually established themselves there as independent princes, opening their ports to piratical Turks, Saracens and Corsairs, who were sure of a welcome to these harbours. And de Villaret saw that the mere destruction of such a nest of pirates would be considered a worthy object, and command the gratitude of Europe. He therefore made a secret reconnaissance of the island, and discovered that the enterprise would be one of greater magnitude than the Order could undertake single-handed. But determining to carry it out, he had returned to Cyprus to organize the expedition, when he died of a sudden illness.

De Villaret's brother, Fulk, unanimously elected to succeed him, went immediately to France to procure an audience of Clement V. and Philip the Fair, who were at Poitiers in secret conclave over the iniquities of the Templars. De Villaret pointed out the great advantages to Christendom which would be gained from the Order's acquisition of Rhodes. And the Pope, entering warmly into the scheme, contributed a large sum from his private resources, as well as the help of his immense

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influence in obtaining men and money from the various nations. But, as not uncommon in these medieval times, the real object of the enterprise was hidden in a somewhat scandalous manner, under the guise of a new Crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land, with plenary indulgence to those who joined or contributed to the expedition. And such hosts of enthusiasts flocked to Brundisium (Brindisi), from which the expedition was to start, that de Villaret had only sufficient transport for a third of them. Choosing the most useful of the volunteers, he embarked on galleys furnished for the supposed Crusade by the King of Sicily and the republic of Genoa.

Passing Rhodes, in order to lull any suspicion of his real object, de Villaret entered a port in Asia Minor; from which he sent a formal demand to the Emperor of Constantinople for the cession of the Island of Rhodes. As he knew that the request would be refused, it gave him an excellent excuse to take the island by force. He therefore embarked his forces, who were now intensely eager to know their destination. Only informing his Order of his intentions, he made a sudden descent; and landing on the island, took the inhabitants completely by surprise, and nearly all the country fell into his hands.

The great city alone remained in Saracen possession. And here by far the most serious part of the business began. For the Saracens, recovering from the panic during which they put to sea, soon returned to swell the garrison. While the

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Emperor of Constantinople sent a force to help expel the invaders—hoping, possibly, to regain possession of Rhodes for himself.

Yet, further, de Villaret's own forces began to melt away. For many who had joined with enthusiasm as Crusaders for the redemption of Jerusalem, were disgusted at discovering they were intended to fight merely for the private advantage of an Order, notwithstanding the debt owed to it by Christendom at large. And de Villaret at length found himself deserted, and in a state of siege in his own camp, with only his fraternity to depend on. Hopeless as his case seemed, he determined to put it to the touch. And after a desperate struggle broke through and drove his enemies across the mainland. But now, too weak in numbers to assault the city, he blockaded it and awaited reinforcements from Europe. Then, replenished with men and money, he delivered the great assault on August 5th, 1310. And before nightfall the White Cross banner was waving on the ramparts of Rhodes, while the remnant of the pirates fled to the shores of Asia.

CHAPTER III

RHODES. 1310—1522

“**F**OUNDED B.C. 408, and laid out by the same great architect, Hippodamus, who built the Piræus, Rhodes was probably one of the earliest of the Hellenic cities of which the plan was designed by one master-mind. Hence that symmetry in the arrangement of the city which the rhetorician Aristides, writing in the second century, A.D., describes in a well-known passage.”* It was built in the form of an amphitheatre, surrounded by a wall, with stately towers and battlements, which he compares to a crown. Its maritime greatness was due not only to the situation of the island, but to its harbours and its perfectly equipped dockyards and arsenal, above which towered the famous bronze Colossus, serving as a lighthouse and sea-mark.

Such was the city which became the home of the Knights of Rhodes—as they were now called—for over two hundred years. For the ancient Greek walls were still fairly intact; to this day

* C. T. Newton, “Travels and Discoveries in the Levant.” Vol. I. p. 147.

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parts of them are still standing ; and in the hands of the Knights it became one of the most strongly fortified cities in Europe.

The island during earlier Greek times was famed for its constant supply of hardy seamen. In Roman times Rhodes was the chief city of the Province of the Islands, or " the Cyclades." But under the effete Empire of Constantinople, it became tainted by the same decay which was eating into the mother-country. And at the date of its conquest by the Knights, the people had lost all their former energy and strength of character, and had abjectly submitted to the Saracen pirates.

De Villaret's first act after gaining possession of Rhodes was to secure his position. He therefore embarked at once on board the fleet, visited all the islands lying north and west, and speedily enforced their submission. He thus took possession of Chalce, Symia, Nisyros, Leros, Calymnos, Telos, now known as Piskopi, and the island of Castel Rosso (Megiste) on the east, with Cos, 150 miles due north of Rhodes, where he built a strong fort as an outpost against aggression. While Patmos was assigned to the Grand Master as his private domain.

In addition to these islands, the Knights built a castle on the mainland at Budrum, the ancient Halicarnassus, now famous throughout the world for the Mausoleum of Mausolus, discovered by Mr. C. T. (afterwards Sir Charles) Newton, in 1856. On the rocky extremity of the harbour, upon a rock 400 feet square, the site of an an-

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cient Greek acropolis, "Philibert de Naillac built the stately castle, which still stands, a specimen of the military architecture of the Knights not less worthy than the fortress of Rhodes."* And in April, 1856, Mr. Newton says: "The long brass guns of the Knights are still in the batteries, and their powder lies caked up in the magazines." The south-east tower is of especial interest to us, as it was rebuilt by the English Langue when the castle was recaptured from the infidel in 1414, and it is decorated with the arms of Edward IV. and many other English shields, which are sculptured over the doorway.

De Villaret also fortified the coasts of Rhodes. And next to the city itself, Lindos was the most important town on the island. For here the Knights built a great castle. It towers over the sea on a promontory, upon the site of the ancient Greek acropolis and temple to Athene, with magnificent and imposing effect; joined to the island by low land on which the town stands. "The streets are most picturesque, with arched passages thrown across them. The houses, though built more than three centuries ago, are as fresh as if built yesterday; and it is curious that in this obscure corner of the Turkish Empire we have as well-preserved specimens of the military architecture of Europe in the 15th century as perhaps anywhere in Europe itself. The Turks have here, as in Rhodes, done little injury to the buildings left by the Knights."†

* Newton, vol. II. p. 63.

† Newton, vol. 1. p. 193.

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Seventeen other castles and numerous watch-towers gradually completed the defence of the island. And some notion of their numbers may be gathered, when one learns that in 1477 it took Grand Master d'Aubusson forty days to make a tour of inspection. The guardianship of the coast was entrusted to the Turcopolier, or Pillar of the Langue of England, who was always chosen as commander of the Knights' cavalry. And the coast guard and garrisons of these forts were recruited from Rhodian Greeks, who formed an excellent corps.

Rhodes, even to-day, must indeed be one of the most interesting and picturesque cities ever connected with the Knights of St. John. For the greater part of these buildings and works are still practically intact ; and its splendid walls, with their many towers and gates, testify to what its strength must have been in the days of its glory. For, although the Turks broke through the walls in one place, they have on the whole respected the work of the Knights. And as the island now happily belongs to Italy, it will be well cared for in future.

The city lies at the northern end of the island. Its outline is a rough semicircle, with the outer part of this circle southwards, while the almost circular basin of the Grand Harbour cuts deep into its northern face. From the sea we look nearly due south up the Grand Harbour ; and on our right a long jetty stretching northwards far out to sea, ends in the principal outwork, the round tower

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and fort of St. Nicholas. This forms the eastern side of the smaller harbour, known as the Mandrakee, or Galley Harbour. It was on the site of St. Nicholas' fort that the famous Colossus probably stood. And it has been suggested that a sucking dredger might still discover some of its fragments buried in the sea below. This fort was built in 1464, on the site of an earlier Arab one. And Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, contributed 12,000 crowns in gold to its erection, in memory of the Burgundians who held the old fort against the Egyptians in 1444. His shield is still to be seen on the face of the round tower looking seawards, and also over the doorway from the Mole.

The entrance to the Grand Harbour was guarded by two immense towers, serving not only as forts but as lighthouses. On the west of the entrance was de Nailhac's Tower, built about 1400—a square tower 150 feet high, with a round bartizan turret hanging out at each angle of the heavy machicolations at the top, and a central octagonal tower rising above them. This very striking tower was cracked by an earthquake in early days, and repaired. But it was partially destroyed in 1863 by another severe earthquake, and was eventually demolished, as it formed a constant menace to ships entering the harbour. A beautiful drawing, by Mr. A. Severn, of this tower, made fortunately a year or two before this disaster, is to be found in Mr. Newton's "Travels and Discoveries in the Levant." The blue granite base still exists at the

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end of a short mole at right angles to St. Nicholas Mole, where both meet at St. Paul's Tower ; and the spot may yet be seen where a great chain was drawn across the mouth of the harbour, 250 yards wide, to the Windmill Tower opposite.

The Windmill Tower, still in good preservation, now defends the harbour of Rhodes on the east. It is round, about 75 feet high, surrounded by fortifications, and built by the Knights on an ancient Greek foundation. It takes its name from the many windmills—three of which still stand—on the jetty, which forms the eastern side of the Grand Harbour. “ The guarding of these three towers, St. Nicholas, Nailhac and Windmill, was entrusted for a term of three years to a Knight of established reputation for bravery, chosen in rotation from amongst the several Tongues (*Langues*) or Bodies composing the Order ”* under the title of Captain of the Three Towers.

In 1465 the ramparts of Rhodes were allotted to each of the eight Langues of the Order ; a slight difference being made during the last siege, when the Langue of England exchanged their portion for that of Auvergne.

The portion of France comprised Nailhac's, St. Paul's and St. Nicholas' Towers, with the Mandrakee Harbour and walls as far as the Amboise Gate ; and included the Auberge de France and the Grand Master's Palace. A Turkish military hospital has been built in what was the Grand Master's garden, where, in the 15th century

* “ Rhodes of the Knights,” de Belabre, p. 38.

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among fragments of precious Greek sculptures and other curiosities, ostriches, Indian sheep, a Siamese dog and other animals were kept.

The Languedoc of Germany ran from beyond the Amboise Gate to St. George's Gate. But the German Knights were poor, and least of all in numbers. As Faber wrote in 1557: "*Minimi sunt nobilis Alemanni, semper paupiores et omnium servi.*" And their first walls were pulled down and rebuilt by Pierre d'Aubusson, one of the strongest and most famous of the Grand Masters of the Order, who successfully repelled the first Turkish siege under Paleologus in 1480. The boulevard of Germany was connected along a parapet way with a gate of the Palace, which is now intact, and flanked by two round towers.

St. George's Gate, dividing Germany from Auvergne, is one of the most interesting of all. Baron de Belabre says: "The road from the town went through the thickness of the curtain and then passed on either side of St. George's Tower. Right and left in the body of the outer work are two stories of wonderful underground rooms, beautifully vaulted. These are 50 feet long by 30 feet wide, and 25 feet high. The lower rooms are deep underground and have large fireplaces. The upper rooms, which are of the same height as the rampart, are ventilated by openings in their roofs. . . . No doubt that these chambers formed some of the guard houses, which Bosio says d'Aubusson built in 1501."*

* de Belabre, p. 55.

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The walls of Auvergne ran from St. George's Gate to the Tower of Spain, or Aragon, and the Gate of Athanasios. These walls of Spain suffered heavily in the last siege of 1522; and not one of the numerous shields and inscriptions found elsewhere are to be seen upon them. For here the great breach was made, through which the Turks finally forced their way into the city.

The walls of England, the sixth Langue of the Order, run for 450 yards from St. Mary's Tower, belonging to Spain, to the English Tower and Gate of St. John. They are in very fair preservation, with many shields. They are strengthened in "the whole length by a *terre-plein* which continues round St. John's Tower, so that one has to cross two ditches to get into the town. . . . The entrance through St. John's Gate is as crooked as that through the Amboise Gate,"* passing under three gateways, and a double arched bridge and drawbridge over the first ditch. Over the gate the shields of d'Aubusson and the Order, with a bust of a very warlike St. John, holding a formidable spear and sword in the triangle above them, are well preserved. Beyond England come the walls of Provence, the first and most powerful of the Langues, which flew a white standard with the five golden crosses of Jerusalem in memory of the first Grand Master and Founder of the Order, Brother Gerard. Italy comes next, the walls ending at the Windmill Mole. And the walls of Castile, wholly on the sea, comprise the mole,

**Id.*

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the Windmill Tower, part of the Grand Harbour, and the magnificent St. Catherine's Gate. This, the finest of all the gates of Rhodes, stands nearly in the centre of the harbour's shore, two massive towers flanking it with heavy machicolations and battlements. And above the gateway on the side facing the harbour, a marble canopy in a deep stone moulding encloses three statues, much injured, of St. Peter, St. Catherine and St. John Baptist.

Beyond this gate is the Sea Gate, which connected the Collachium, or military city, with the harbour. Two square projecting towers in the walls beyond, which enclosed the garden of Auvergne near St. Paul's Tower, are still believed by the Turkish and Greek inhabitants of Rhodes to have supported the famous Colossus, standing astride, a foot on each. Unfortunately for this belief, they were built by the Knights sixteen hundred years after he was destroyed by an earthquake.

The Collachium quarter enclosed the Grand Master's Palace, the Hospital, and the eight Auberges of the various Langues, with St. John's Church. And in this quarter, walled off from the rest of the city and strictly guarded, the Knights lived. Its walls ran from the end of the walls of Castile past St. Catherine's Gate towards the gate of St. George, and then turned northwards, enclosing the Palace and St. John's Church and Gate. Besides the Sea Gate, those of St. Paul,

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St. Catherine, and Amboise also gave access to it. While the European merchants, the Rhodian inhabitants, with Greeks and Jews, all lived in the Bourg or town, which formed the large south-eastern portion of the city.

It is a striking testimony to the honour in which the Knights were held by their enemies, the Turks, that their shields and inscriptions have never been defaced, and still abound throughout Rhodes. For on the old houses of the Knights in the Collachium (though till lately disfigured by the Moucharabie of modern Turks), innumerable slabs of white and grey marble on the brown stone of buildings and walls bear striking coats of arms, some framed in flamboyant borders, many of the Knights' shields being as fresh as if cut but yesterday.

The flat-roofed houses of the narrow streets, with small doors and windows, none of the latter being seen on the ground floor, are joined overhead at close intervals, especially in the Bourg, by arches intended as safeguards against earthquakes, save in the wider Street of the Knights.

The Palace of the Grand Master was unhappily destroyed in 1856, by lightning striking some forgotten powder under St. John's Church. And nothing remains of its former magnificence but a few cells, which were used by the Turks for prisoners. While St. John's conventual church, connected with the Palace by a covered gallery, was completely destroyed. But many tombs of

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the Grand Masters were some few years ago secured by the French authorities, who heard they were to be sold for a comparatively small sum. And these are now in the Cluny Museum in Paris. Among them is a fine sarcophagus of Robert de Juillac, with three shields, which was used by the Turks as a water-trough. Others are recumbent figures of Pierre de Cornilhan, Dieudonné de Gozon, and Jean Baptiste Orsini. While medieval armour was also found in the tombs among the ruins of the church.

The Street of the Knights, however, is in fair preservation ; and is much wider than most of the others. In it were the eight Auberges, or head-houses of the Order. And here shields and inscriptions are endless and most interesting. The Auberge de Provence is well preserved, and bears four shields in grey marble, within a cruciform border above the Gothic doorway—the portal itself being decorated with fleurs de lys of a complicated form. In one room Baron de Belabre discovered “a fleur de lys dividing the date 1425, above an eight-pointed cross, with a moon in the dexter, and a sun-in-glory in the sinister canon, and below them the shield of the Order.” Further on, in an angle beyond the arcade of Aragon, is a picturesque carved canopy against the wall, reached by ten steps, which may have been an outside pulpit, or possibly a niche which held a statue.

The Auberge de France, however, is the gem of

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the Knights' buildings, elaborately carved, and ornamented with shields in white and grey marble. Built on sloping ground, it is in three blocks, so that the heavy moulding along the front rises in steps. Though greatly disfigured until now by the Moucharabie of its Turkish owner, it still remains charming, picturesque, and essentially French of the early Renaissance. "Several mullion windows, ornamented under heads of fleurs de lys, have carved square hood-mouldings, carried half-way down the sides of the openings and terminated in flowered corbels."* To break the monotony of the line of battlements, four bartisans stand out at equal distances, between gargoyles of dragons or crocodiles' heads. The shields on this house are extremely interesting. One of de l'Isle Adam, with the Order in chief, is inscribed "*Pour la Maison, 1511.*" Another has "*Saynt Denis!*" the war-cry of France, on either side of the crowned arms of France, with "*Voluntas Dei est, 1405,*" (the *cri de guerre* of the Crusaders) below, and "*Dieu sauve le pèlerin*" above.

They were master-builders, these Rhodian masons. Their ancient Greek traditions were a racial possession. And when these were re-awakened by the breath of the early French Renaissance, they blossomed into new life; so that Rhodian builders carried the architecture of Medieval France far afield. Mr. W. J. Childs, in

* de Belabre, p. 113.

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his delightful book* tells us that at Talas in the heart of Asia Minor, "Rhodian builders brought ideas derived from structures created by the Knights of St. John here, with result that the streets of Talas show a style of building considerably influenced by medieval France, England and Italy. . . . The upper stories of buildings are made to overhang, carried on rows of heavy corbels, and arches and vaultings are used as familiar forms. On the least opportunity a bold gateway is contrived"—a door in a garden wall has a heavy arch or moulding, and stone vaulted passages through medieval gateways run under buildings. From photographs of this singular eastern town a few miles from Cesarea, one might suppose oneself to be looking at some ancient town in Provence.

The Hospital—the most important building, as usual, in any city of the Knights Hospitallers—is at the end of the Street of the Knights. It covers half an acre, and is square, with an open courtyard in the centre. On the façade are eight round-headed arches, supporting a covered gallery above, with slightly pointed arches. This gallery opens into four long rooms, which formed the first floor. And over the early Gothic main entrance is a bay window, with remains of a Gothic frame and carving. The lower rooms, which were used by the Turks as barracks, have Gothic pillars supporting a vaulted roof. But now, being happily in the

* "Across Asia Minor on Foot." W. J. Childs, Blackwood, 1917, p. 183.

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hands of Italy, the whole building is turned into an Archæological Museum. The exquisite cloisters which run round the inner court are denuded of whitewash, and show the beauty of their Gothic vaulting, and the fine ribs and arches which spring from richly sculptured corbels against the inner walls. While shields and tombs of the Knights, pillars and capitals and precious bits of carving, are piously collected below them against the wall. Much, too, has been done in the city in clearing away Turkish Moucharabie. In one case an elaborately carved, square-headed window has been discovered behind one of these eastern balconies. And the delicate doorway of the Auberge de Provence, one of the best in Rhodes, which was masked by a wall built against it, is now seen in all its beauty.

Firmly settled now in Rhodes, the work of the Order became more definitely warlike than ever before, and of the utmost importance to the whole of Christian Europe. For the Knights of St. John were, in deed as well as in word, "Defenders of the Faith" against the growing power of Islam. With their great war fleet, and their complete military organization, the Knights of Rhodes—as they were now called—formed a formidable bulwark against the Turks in their ambitious intention to conquer the whole of Western Europe after the capture of Constantinople in 1453.

The Turkish Emperors were fully alive to the danger the Knights Hospitallers offered to their

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schemes of domination; and determined at last to rid themselves of these powerful and very inconvenient neighbours, and to add the beautiful island of Rhodes once more to their empire. In the first seventy years of peaceful occupation by the knights, the country, thanks to its amazing fertility, had been turned into a vast garden. Dupuis, a member of the Order, who arrived soon after the first Turkish siege, says: "Around the city of Rhodes lay the most admirable country in the world for carrying on a siege, for all about the said town there were numerous gardens filled with little churches and Greek chapels, with old walls and stone and rocks, behind which cover could always be found against the garrison, to such an extent that if all the artillery in the world had been inside the town it could have done no harm to those without provided they did not approach too close." If the magnificent fortifications of the Knights were in their favour, the country round offered almost equal advantages to the powerful enemy. And therefore, feeling secure of victory, Paleologus Pasha, on May 23rd, 1480, disembarked with an enormous fleet and army representing the whole weight of the Turkish Empire, and encamped at the foot of St. Stephen Hill, which overlooked the city on the west.

Fortunately for the fate of Rhodes, Pierre d'Aubusson was Grand Master at this moment—a man of such strength of character, dauntless courage, and ready resource as to command

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absolute confidence. And despite attacks by sea and land, breaches in the walls on the southern side, and the pounding of St. Nicholas' fort on the north, d'Aubusson's example inspired not only the men of the Order, but even women and children, in such a determined defence, that on July 27th the Turks were finally driven off. The demoralized enemy hastily embarked on their galleys. And Rhodes was saved. D'Aubusson himself was desperately wounded: but he recovered. "The Pope presented him with a cardinal's hat in token of his admiration; and the fame of the Order rose throughout Europe, to even a higher pitch than it had yet attained."*

Had the Knights been defeated—had they lost Rhodes at that moment—the whole Mediterranean would have been at the mercy of the Turks. And the history of Europe might have been strangely altered.

Instead of this, the Turks and the Knights remained at peace for forty years. Dismayed by his defeat and the loss of 9,000 killed and 15,000 wounded, Mahomet II. died two years later, leaving only the epitaph he had chosen for himself—"I designed to conquer Rhodes and subdue Italy"—as a memorial of his unlucky venture. While his two sons, Bajazet and Zizim disputed the Ottoman succession. Zizim fled for refuge to Rhodes; where d'Aubusson's good offices as mediator were so successful as to gain security for the Knights from any fear of invasion. And it was in token

* Porter.



Aringhieri, Knight of Rhodes (Malta). Pinturicchio
(Siena Cathedral).



[From a print in the Chancery.]

Malta, 1730.

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of his gratitude to d'Aubusson for this help in allaying the quarrel, that Bajazet paid the Order an annual subsidy for the maintenance of his brother, and sent d'Aubusson the Knights' most precious treasure—the hand of St. John Baptist.

The long peace, however, was at last broken in 1522, while Philippe de l'Isle Adam was Grand Master. For Suleiman the Magnificent—who two years later captured Bagdad—determined to signalize the beginning of his reign by taking “Rhodes of the Knights,” which had defied the efforts of Mahomet II.

After capturing Belgrade, Suleiman began gigantic preparations for this more important object. His army consisted of 140,000 men, and to these were added 60,000 peasants from Bosnia and Wallachia as labourers for field works and mining operations. While the fleet consisted of 400 vessels of various descriptions, including 100 galleys, many of large size.

The Knights, a mere handful in comparison with these huge forces, and aware of their danger, hastened on the defences of their city, which had been greatly improved since the first siege. The country round had been cleared of all that had served as cover for the besiegers. The Great Harbour was closed by a double chain; and the Galley Harbour blocked by sunken boats filled with stones. While a third rampart was added to the exposed parts of the double enceinte of the city. Besides the eight Langues who defended

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their own ramparts, the *corps de reserve* was divided into four portions. Chancellor d'Amarel, with one, supported the walls of Auvergne and Germany. The English Turcopolier, John Buck (he must have been a man of Devon by his name) those of Spain and England. The Grand Prior of France those of France and Castile. And the Grand Prior of Navarre those of Provence and Italy. While the tower of St. Nicholas was commanded by a Provençal Knight, Guyot de Castellan, with a garrison of twenty knights and 300 men.

On June 26th, 1522, during the octave of St. John Baptist, the Turks arrived. And within a few days their lines stretched right round the city with their flanks on the water's edge, while the great fleet closed the whole sea front. So that Rhodes was completely isolated by land and sea.

Owing to the imperative necessity of saving his small forces, de l'Isle Adam dared not interfere with this investment : but reserved all his strength for defence against the attack which quickly came. The two points selected by the Turks were the bastion of Italy on the east, and a point between the ramparts of Aragon and Auvergne on the west. "The battering train included six 10-inch and fifteen 16-inch brass cannon, twelve large 30-inch, and two 33-inch mortars. Bourbon records that from this gigantic artillery they discharged 1,713 stone shot and eight brass balls filled with artificial fire. These latter were prob-

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ably, the first attempt at the use of shells on record.”*

But when the siege had lasted a month with violent attack and counter-attack without definite result—the garrison repairing the damage as soon as it was made—Suleiman saw that other methods than a simple war of artillery must be tried against such determined adversaries. He began approaches by mines, de l’Isle Adam replying by counter-mines. But two galleries under the bastion of England were successful; and the Turks seized the breach, only to be driven off again. Furious attacks were made throughout September, the bastions of Spain, Italy, Auvergne and England being simultaneously attacked on the 24th. And still the Knights held on grimly and splendidly.

By November, however, ammunition was running short; and there were evidences of treason in the city, of which Suleiman was well aware when he suggested a capitulation. The only answer was that “the Knights of St. John only treated with the infidel sword in hand.” A second attempt proved equally fruitless. And if de l’Isle Adam had had none but members of the Order in the town, he would have held out to the last. But the large civil population began to clamour for peace when they knew that terms had once been offered. So, summoning a council, the Grand Master called on the Order’s engineer, Martinigo, to report on the fortifications. Martinigo then asserted on his honour and conscience

* Porter.

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that the place was no longer tenable—there was not enough labour left “to move a piece of artillery from one battery to another; all further repairs and reconstructions had become impossible; their ammunition and stores were nearly all consumed; the enemy were already established upon two very vital points, and in his opinion the town was lost.”*

Therefore, after a long and stormy council, it was decided that the next offer of parley should be accepted. And after some delays, and the further loss of the Spanish bastion, envoys were sent to Suleiman to surrender on the best terms they could get. They were received by the great Sultan in his magnificent pavilion. And he renewed the very generous terms he had already offered. These were, that on condition “of the instant surrender of the town, he was prepared to permit the Grand Master, with all the members of his Order, together with such of the citizens as chose to follow them, to depart unmolested *with all their personal property.*”† Twenty-five Knights, including two Grand Crosses, and the same number of citizens, were to be given as hostages for the execution of the treaty; while the Turkish army was to withdraw, and only 4,000 picked Janissaries were to enter the city, who took formal possession.

And if the loss of Rhodes was a deep disgrace to the nations of Europe, who had stood aside watching the siege with interest but doing nothing

* Porter.

† *Id.*

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to help, it was only a fresh title of gallant devotion added to the long record of the Knights of St. John, a mere handful of brave men, at desperate odds on behalf of Christianity against the power of Islam.

CHAPTER IV

MALTA. 1530–1565

THE SIEGE

FOR seven long years, the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem wandered homeless from Candia to Civita Vecchia, Viterbo and Messina ; while their Grand Master, de l'Isle Adam, visited all the courts of Europe in the endeavour to win their help in recovering his lost island. Among other courts, he came to England and stayed in the Priory of the Order at Clerkenwell for some days, until Henry VIII. invited him to his newly-built Palace of St. James. But apparently the King's assistance to the homeless Knights was meagre. As—save for a personal gift to the Grand Master of a golden ewer and basin set with precious stones—it was limited to a present of “nineteen great cannon and 1,023 balls.” Curiously enough, as Mr. Fincham records, one of these guns was dredged up in the harbour of Famagusta, Cyprus, in 1907, “and there were seen upon it the royal arms of England, and of de l'Isle Adam quartered with those of the Order, and the number XIII., proving

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it to be part of King Henry's gift. The gun stands to-day on the terrace of Government House, Nicosia, as a memento of England's assistance to the Order."*

It was of the utmost importance that the Order, after having for so many centuries checked Turkish aggression in the Mediterranean, should find a new home in the same region. And at length, after much delay and many negotiations, help came to them from Spain ; when the Emperor Charles V. offered de l'Isle Adam the sovereignty of the islands of Malta and Gozo. The terms on which the offer was based were so severe at first as to make acceptance impossible. But thanks to the Pope, Clement VII., who had been a Knight of St. John in his youth, these were reduced. And in 1530 Charles V. signed the deed of the Order's perpetual sovereignty on annual payment of a falcon, in sign of their feudal tenure. The office of Grand Falconer was an important one from henceforth in the Order ; and the baton in ivory and gilt bronze of a holder of this office, is preserved in the Library at St. John's Gate. The Order also agreed that they would never make war on the Emperor or on Sicily ; " and that the nomination to the bishopric of Malta should rest with the Emperor from among three candidates to be selected by the fraternity, one of whom should always be a Spaniard."†

* Fincham, p. 8.

† Porter. The document is still preserved in the Armoury of the Palace, Malta, signed in the Emperor's hand, " Yo el rey," dated March 24th, 1530.

MALTA. THE SIEGE

It was on October 26th, 1530, that de l'Isle Adam and his fleet arrived at Malta and assumed the sovereignty of the islands. At the gate of the Citta Notabile, surrounded by feeble fortifications, the Grand Master, swearing upon the Holy Cross to preserve the privileges of the Maltese and to govern them according to their ancient laws, received the keys and made his entry.

The fleet was led by the great ship *Santa Anna*, commanded by the English Knight, Sir William Weston. She was regarded as "the wonder of the age"; and indeed is worthy of special notice, as she was the first armour-plated ship known. A curious account of this ship is given by Jacomo Bosio in his history of the "Illustrious Militia of St. John of Jerusalem." When other galleys spoke her, "the loftiest of their spars barely approached within a foot of her great poop. She had six decks (of which two were under water), all sheathed with lead and bolted with *brass, which does not consume as iron does*, and thus constructed it was impossible to sink her, though all the artillery of a fleet were fired against her. Her huge mainmast was made in pieces and of such size as six men could not embrace it. She had three tops, one above the other, *topmast above topmast*, and constructed not merely for convenience of setting sails, but also to mount small pieces of artillery, which she always carried. Her timbers were so strong and thick, that having been many times engaged, and receiving much cannonading, she was never pierced below the bulwarks. But all

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these wonders were surpassed by the number and size of her columbines and heavy artillery which were mounted on her upper deck, poop, forecastle, and waist, to the number of fifty pieces of every size and calibre." The "wonder of the age" also carried two great boats of fifteen benches of rowers, and five others. While she contained a large chapel, had a crew of 300, an armoury for 500 men, and carried ammunition and provision for six months at sea, with hand mills and ovens for fresh bread every day.

With their arrival in the island began the period of greatest magnificence of the Knights of Malta, as they were henceforth called. Their first business, naturally, on taking possession of their new home, was to render it secure against attack. While at the same time it was necessary to cultivate the rocky barren soil—a great contrast to the fertility and luxuriant growth of Rhodes. For though the island of Gozo is far more fertile than Malta, it was destitute of harbours, and being four miles away across the channel, could not be depended on for supplies.

The well-known and magnificent harbour of Malta—which was the chief attraction for the Knights of an otherwise barren and uninviting island—is divided into two portions by the promontory of Mount Sceberras. The eastern portion or Great Harbour is far the largest, and is again subdivided into three inner harbours by two other promontories on its eastern side. The western portion, known as Marsa Muscetta, is also of con-

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siderable size, as well as being sheltered from the north-east wind.

When the Knights took possession, the only fortification of Malta was a fort on the first of the promontories, jutting out into the great harbour, and called the Castle of St. Angelo, with a small group of houses clustered about it, known as the Bourg; the second promontory being known as Senglea, while the chief town, the Citta Notabile, lay some distance inland. Therefore, one of the first cares of de l'Isle Adam " was to look after the fortifications, and to place himself under cover from any irruption by pirates. For this purpose he deepened the ditches at the head of the Bourg, and made several additions to the Castle of St. Angelo."* He at once saw the advantages of such a dominating position as Mount Sceberras. But the Order was so impoverished by its seven years of wandering, and by the large colony of 4,000 Rhodians—who had followed the Knights and subsisted on their charity sooner than remain under Turkish rule—that works of any magnitude were impossible at first.

In 1541, however, Grand Master John Od'medes called Caramolin, chief engineer to the Emperor, in order to consult him as to the fortifications of the island. His emphatic advice was to fortify Mount Sceberras: and later on a fort, St. Elmo, was built there. To meet this expense " the Bailiffs and Grand Crosses contributed part of their plate and gold chains, and in 1553 guns

* MS. History of the Fortifications of Malta, 1717.

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were mounted on the forts of St. Michael on Senglea and at St. Elmo.”*

It was indeed well that in the early years of their sojourn these precautions had been taken. For in 1565, the Turks who had made an unsuccessful attempt in 1551, determined to make another bid for supremacy of the Mediterranean. Suleiman the Magnificent, who was still alive, attacked Malta with 180 ships ; and on May 20th, he landed 20,000 troops under Mustapha Pasha, and opened fire on St. Elmo. Thus began the famous siege of Malta, which stirred all the kingdoms of Europe who watched its course, with such intense interest, that even Queen Elizabeth, who had scant kindness for the Knights (having dispossessed them of their properties in England on her accession), ordered prayers to be said in all English churches “ for the defenders of Christendom.”

Jean Parisot de la Valette had become Grand Master in 1557 ; and had already called together all members of the Order, having also trained and organized the militia of the island. So that he had under his command 474 Knights and 67 serving brethren of the Order ; 1,200 regular forces, including hired Spanish troops ; and 6,835 militia and volunteers from Sicily, Italy, Genoa and Piedmont. So that, including the Order, La Valette had nearly 9,000 men to depend on. While the Viceroy of Sicily, who had visited Malta previously and left his son to win his spurs under

* *Id.*

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such a leader as La Valette, had pledged himself to come with powerful reinforcements in case of need.

St. Elmo held out bravely. But the garrison was small; and cut off as it was from the main body of the Knights who were in St. Angelo, it fell after a month of savage fighting. On the eve of St. Elmo's Day, the defenders, now reduced to sixty, went down to Mass in the chapel in the base of the fort receiving absolution and holy communion. Then returning to the walls—even the wounded seated in chairs helping—they fought on for six hours, until the last man was killed. The Turks burst in, and the ferocious Mustapha cut off the heads of the dead Knights and placed them on poles looking towards St. Angelo; while their bodies, fastened to planks in the form of a cross to add to the insult, were floated up the harbour to St. Angelo. The Grand Master La Valette, it must be said, replied in even more brutal fashion. For he promptly beheaded his chief Turkish prisoners, and fired their heads from his cannon into the Turkish camp.

Mustapha, now having complete possession of the commanding position of Mount Sceberras, moved the main portion of his army round the head of the Great Harbour, to encircle La Valette's positions on the two promontories of the Bourg and Senglea. And his trenches on the high land of Corradin and Bighi behind them, completely isolated La Valette and his garrison from succour.

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For two months more the great siege went on with unabated fury, until both sides were well-nigh exhausted. La Valette's appeals for help to the Viceroy of Sicily whenever he could send them, grew more and more insistent; for, hemmed in to the lines of the Bourg and Senglea, his fate seemed absolutely hopeless. But, whether by Philip of Spain's secret orders, or his own fears of compromising the Spanish fleet, the Viceroy still hesitated to fulfil his solemn engagement. And, but for La Valette's personal determination and magnificent courage, it would have been no surprise if the Knights had given up the defence in despair. Yet the Turks were in almost as bad a case as the defenders. Decimated by wounds and disease, with their ammunition running short, a great assault on August 23rd was completely repulsed by the Knights. And when at length the Viceroy's long-expected fleet appeared with 8,500 troops, of whom 300 belonged to the Order—a further 4,000 soon following—the Turks took to their galleys and fled.

It was high time indeed. From first to last the Turks lost 30,000 men. While the losses of the Order were 260 Knights and 8,000 men-at-arms, of whom the greater part were native Maltese, who proved themselves the equals in devoted heroism of all the other nations engaged. To this day a Requiem Mass is sung in Malta for the splendid defenders of the island. And as the bells are heard, the people say, "It is for the deliverance of the Knights."

CHAPTER V

THE BUILDING OF VALETTA

EUROPE, as we have said, watched the siege with intense and anxious interest. For Malta was looked upon by Italy and Spain as an advanced post for both powers. And if Suleiman the Magnificent had established himself there, the kingdom of Sicily and the States of the Church would have been more or less at the mercy of his pirate subjects. When, therefore, his defeat was known, the relief was great both at the courts of Madrid and Rome. Philip of Spain sent La Valette a special ambassador with a magnificent poignard and sword, the hilts of gold and precious stones.* While at Rome the city was illuminated; a salute fired from St. Angelo; and Pius IV. offered La Valette a cardinal's hat. This distinction the latter wisely refused, under the plea "that the office of Grand Master involved functions so diametrically opposed to those of a cardinal" that they could scarcely be combined.

Never again, though they often threatened it, did the Turks venture to attack Malta. For scarcely

* See Chapter VI.

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had they disappeared than the dauntless Grand Master set about re-fortifying the island. He decided not only to reconstruct the fort of St. Elmo, but to build an entirely new town on Mount Sceberras, which was eventually named after him, Valetta. The treasury of the Order, however, was empty ; and the prospective cost was enormous. Therefore ambassadors were sent to the various courts of Europe with plans of the proposed scheme, and requests for help in carrying them out.

The Order were now, most naturally, in high favour among the Catholic countries. For it was owing to their magnificent defence in the siege of Malta, that the danger of Moslem aggression had been finally defeated. And great sums were guaranteed to them by the Pope, the King of France, Philip of Spain, and the King of Portugal. While the Knights rivalled one another in contributions—many of the commanders not only sending the entire revenues of their commanderies, but stripping themselves of their personal possessions.

La Valette, thus supported, summoned the most eminent engineers and architects from Italy. And the Pope dispatched his chief engineer, Francesco Laparelli, to help the Grand Master. "The design of most of the principal works of Valetta may be attributed to this engineer, the general idea only having been sketched out by La Valette."* And on the 28th of March, 1566,

* Porter.

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the first stone of the new city was laid with the utmost pomp by La Valette himself at the corner of St. John's Bastion. A record of the ceremony is still preserved in Malta, after the decree of the Council.

“Inchoatia Civitatis ad Montem Sancti Elmi. Die XXVIII. Mensis Martii. MDLXVI. fuit incepta et inchoata Civitas ad Montem Sancti Elmi cuiquidem civitati Vallettæ nomen impositum fuit faxit Deus illud faustum et felix.”*

Beneath the newly laid stone a number of gold and silver coins were deposited, with a remarkably fine bronze medal, specially struck for the occasion. A specimen of this medal is to be seen in the British Museum. On the obverse it bears a fine profile bust of La Valette in armour with the inscription and date I.O. VALLETA. M. HOSP. HIER. Behind the head are various small emblems symbolic of victories over the Turks, and a Caduceus. The reverse bears a raised map of the island of Malta surrounded by waves, with the legend MELITA RENASCENS.

Another very large and beautiful medal has on

* Thanks to the Rev. Henry Mosley, the translation runs thus: “The Founding of the City at the Mount of St. Elmo. On the 28th day of the month of March, 1566, was begun and founded the City at the Mount of St. Elmo, to which city was also given the name of Valletta. May God make it prosperous and happy.”

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the obverse a portrait bust of La Valette to left in figured armour, with cross of the Order on the breast and F. IOANNES DE VALLETTE. M. HOSP. HIE. On reverse a fleet of galleys of the Order, left, with soldiers leaving the nearest. One holds the trunk of an elephant carrying a castle on its back, from which an archer aims at those in the galley. Behind the elephant is a palm tree; and a plan of the fortifications of Valetta in the centre, a sailing vessel approaching it over the sea. The legend above is HABEO TE.

Another has a bust of La Valette to right, with inscription F. IO DE VALLETTA M.M.H.H. MELITEN PRIN. On reverse a plan of the new city, dated 1568, and of Fort Elmo. Flanking the fort is DEO LUX, the legend being TURCICAE OBSIDIONIS PERPETUO PROPUGNACULO. This medal is also struck in silver, but neither so sharply cut nor so elaborate, with certain variations.

The work progressed rapidly as to the fortifications, under the Papal engineer Laparelli, and Jerome Cassan, engineer of the Order. The cities of Italy and Sicily were searched for artificers, and at one time no less than 8,000 workmen were employed to help the masons. It is said, that in La Valette's original plans the high ridge of Mount Sceberras was to be levelled at the top. But owing to constant false alarms as to Turkish attacks, this lengthy process was abandoned. And hence the exhausting flights of steps, which

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all who visit Malta know too well, leading up through modern Valetta ; the steps which caused Byron to curse them heartily.

“ Adieu, ye joys of La Valette,
Adieu, sirocco, sun and sweat.
Adieu, ye cursed streets of stairs,
How surely he who mounts you swears.”

Two years after the founding of the city, on August 21st, 1568, died the famous Grand Master, whose name will always be associated with it and the great siege. His successors pressed on the work of fortification, until in 1571 it was sufficiently advanced to warrant the transfer of the Convent and headquarters from the Bourg to the city of Valetta. And soon the line of fortifications was divided, as usual, among the various Langues of the Order.

Each Langue had its own Auberge, as in Rhodes ; in which the Conventual Bailiff lived as its head—the Conventual Bailiffs or Grand Crosses coming next to the Grand Master in government of the Order. And in these Auberges all the members of each Langue, when in Malta, had their meals and conducted their business. These are nearly all standing—the Auberge de Castile being the most imposing as to architecture, placed on a lofty part of the city. The English Langue alone was unrepresented by an Auberge. “ From the time that Langue had been suppressed by Henry VIII. (1540), until the latest days of the Order’s existence, hopes were from time to time entertained

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of its revival. Care was therefore always taken that the place of the Langue should be preserved intact. In all elections and councils members of the other Langues were nominated to act for England.”* And when the new city was mapped out, one of the best sites in Valetta was carefully preserved for the English Langue. It is now the site of the Opera House.

Additions were constantly made to the fortifications at intervals throughout the 17th century ; more especially when reports of some movement on the part of the Turks seemed to threaten the island. And at the end of the century, the defences of Malta were fairly complete. Valetta was now finished. “ St. Elmo surrounded with an outer *enceinte* ; and the Floriana sufficiently advanced for purposes of defence . . . while the remainder of the works of Vittoriosa, Isola, and St. Angelo were much in the same position as they are now (1871). Fort Ricasoli had been built and occupied, and several towers had been constructed round the island.”* While in 1670, Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner added the well known Cottoner Lines, enclosing the whole of the heights of Santa Margarita.

Meanwhile the Turkish Empire, so powerful and aggressive in the 16th century during the great days of Suleiman the Magnificent, was

* Porter.

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gradually losing its power ; and the Order was at last relieved from all fears of actual invasion. Therefore such additions as each Grand Master saw fit to make to the fortifications, were more for the sake of glory than of actual necessity.

CHAPTER VI

VALETTA OF THE KNIGHTS

TO this day, despite all modern changes and innovations, despite the ceaseless stream of armies, navies, and tourists coming and going from and to the East, Valetta remains the city of the Knights. And to those connected with the Order, the Church of St. John, the Palace of the Grand Master, and the Hospital, are of special interest.

It was during Grand Master La Cassière's rule (1572-1581), that the Church of St. John Baptist was built, the cost of its construction being entirely defrayed out of his official revenues. And it became the conventual church of the Order; a chapel being assigned to each Langue. Built by the architect Girolamo Cussar, it stands in the very heart of Valetta. The whole interior is gorgeous in decoration, not an inch of space but glows with paintings, gildings and carvings. The plain nave, 187 feet long, has six chapels on either side forming aisles, and divided from the nave by massive square pillars and round-headed arches,

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whose whole surface is richly carved and gilded. The barrel roof, 63 feet high with a span of 50 feet, is devoted to paintings of the life of St. John Baptist by the Italian painter-Knight, Mathias Preti. While the tombs of over 400 Knights form the pavement, each slab bearing their arms in rich mosaic. Among the chapels belonging to the various Langues, the French chapel is specially beautiful in its delicate and graceful decoration. The crypt of the church is equally splendid, low depressed arches against the walls, carved, painted and gilded, covering recessed and gorgeous tombs of Grand Masters and Knights. And to this crypt La Cassière transferred the bodies of de l'Isle Adam and La Valette; the latter's body being buried there at a somewhat later date, for he died in Rome, where his heart is still preserved.

At the foot of La Valette's tomb lies his faithful secretary, Oliver Starkey—the only English Knight who fought through the siege of Malta. He was also the last who held the two dignities of the English Langue, namely, the Turcopoliership or command of the cavalry, and the Bailwick of Egle, now represented by a little slum in Clerkenwell known as Eagle Court, and by the honorary office of "Bailiff of Egle," held at this moment by Colonel Sir Herbert Perrott.

Though Napoleon carried off most of the vast treasures of the church in 1798, leaving only enough for ordinary use, he happily spared the magnificent tapestries—a present from Grand

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Master Perellos in 1697—which were prepared to fit the church under the direction of Preti the painter-Knight, by the brothers de Vos of Brussels. These consist of fourteen large pictures, pieces 20 feet by 22, and fourteen small, 6 by 22, several of them after Rubens; with one large one besides of Perellos himself, with allegorical figures of Charity as an Angel giving alms, and Victory in full armour trampling on the Moslem in chains. These are still hung across the arches on great festivals. But we read of statues in solid silver of the twelve Apostles; the gold cup presented by Henry VIII. to de l'Isle Adam; the sword and poignard given by Philip of Spain to La Valette; candelabra, crosses, censers, of gold and silver; and the lamp of solid gold lighting the Chapel of the Virgin. The most precious of all the Knights' treasures was the hand of St. John Baptist, sent by Sultan Bajazet to d'Aubusson. It was "enclosed in a gauntlet-shaped monstrance of solid gold, bedecked with costly gems," in front of which lay a gold ring set with a large diamond or sapphire; the whole being enclosed in a case of solid silver with eight locks, of which one key was kept by the Grand Master, the other seven by the conventual bailiffs.

Hard by the church, the Palace of the Grand Master, built by La Cassière between 1572 and 1581, is now the Governor's Palace. Its many rooms and corridors are decorated with pictures of its Grand Masters, such as the valiant La Valette himself, and of events in their tenure of

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the island, several being by the painter-Knight Preti. While the great Armoury which in the 18th century contained arms for 25,000 men, is now a veritable treasure-house of medieval arms and armour of every description ; although a portion of the collection was brought to England early in the 19th century. It was fortunately bought by Government, and is now in the Rotunda at Woolwich. But in the Armoury of Malta, of which Sir Guy Laking has written a magnificently illustrated catalogue,* we find gilt Saracenic conical helmets, pear-shaped Morions, the “ Chapel de-Fer ” or iron hat, much like the “ tin hats ” of our fighting men to-day, with a breastplate from the sapping armour of Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt, 1601–22, graceful Italian rapiers and Venetian “ Schiavoni,” and exquisitely chased circular shields, etc., etc. Yet though Napoleon left all else here untouched, he carried off with the treasure of the church, the gifts of Philip of Spain to La Valette. The splendid rapier, with its hilt of gold enriched with translucent enamels and set with jewels, he took to France, where it is now kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and is known as the *Épée de la Religion*. While the dagger is in the *Galerie d’Apollon* at the Louvre.

The Hospital of the Knights is still used as the British Military Hospital. And although the Barrack and Hospital Commission of 1863 wrote :

* A catalogue of the armour and arms in the Armoury of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, now in the Palace, Valetta, Malta, 1903.

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“This Hospital is one of the most complicated and unsuitable places for the sick of a garrison,” it is satisfactory to know that things are greatly altered at the present time ; as it is possible now to use the words of Lord Dunraven in the House of Lords, July 11th, 1917. For he then described the hospital accommodation for our troops in Malta as being “as perfect, humanly speaking, as they well could be.” Although, unfortunately, the vast building has always suffered from the disadvantage of standing on the sea front, sheltered from the healthy north and north-east winds.

The great ward, which is now in use, is described as a “stupendous piece of architectural skill,” 503 feet long, 34 feet wide, 30 feet high ; with another at right angles forming part of it in the shape of a T ; besides other wards, dispensaries, library and quarters for officers.

In an old book printed in Rome, 1725,* and translated by Rev. W. K. R. Bedford, we find that the regulations of the wards were very careful in the “Holy Infirmary,” each having its distinct use. And a curious print from an ancient German work on the Order (Augsburg, 1650), shows the great ward with the beds of the sick, and their mosquito-nets or curtains like small tents at the head of the square frames, ready to throw over them.

* *Notizia della Sacra Infermeria*

e

Della Carica delli Commissaj delle Povera Inferme

In Roma, l' anno del Giubileo. MDCCXXV.

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“ One ward is for the Knights and members of the Order *ch'è la più commoda*, and there are two good wards set apart for the wounded.

“ An old ward for the laity, clergy, and pilgrims.

“ A large ward for feverish and other slight ailments.

“ A small ward for serious cases and the dying, with a room adjoining.

“ A very large ward for galley slaves, and two rooms.

“ Room for mad people and their warder.

“ A ward for those who take hot baths separate from the Infirmary.”

Every ward had its chapel for Mass ; and the door of the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament opened “ towards the ward of the dying, for the convenience of the Viaticum.”

“ The beds for the sick are changed from time to time for requisite cleanliness, and they are remade every evening by the warders whose duty is to keep them clean. Sheets are even changed daily in case of need.”

“ The Knights and brothers of the Order have separate sheets of a finer quality ; the laity are also distinguished from the slaves, especially the monks and pilgrims ; altogether the number is 1,517.”

The linen store and laundry seem to have excited the admiration and astonishment of a visitor in the time of Charles II., who records in his diary the remarkable fact, that “ the bed linen was changed once a fortnight.”

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But the regulations disclose further wonders, saying: "It contributes greatly to the dignity of the Infirmary and to the cleanliness of the sick, their being served night and morning with covers, bowls and plates of silver; even the small boilers from which the soup is served and the large dishes holding meat and other things are of silver. The slaves are supplied with pewter vessels." And other records show that in 1725 the silver plate consisted of 1,140 articles, weighing 1,215 pounds.

The brethren of the Order were expected to wait on the sick at meals, each Language in turn.

But notwithstanding silver plate, and "sheets of finer quality for knights and brothers of the Order," the Hospital seemed anything but a paradise, from Howard's ghastly report in 1789 on the Lazarettos of Europe. He describes the great ward's lofty ceiling "of wood now turned black"; under the great hall another ward "which is nothing but a dark, damp cellar." The patients fed twice a day at eight and four—one of the Knights and an under physician seeing to the distribution. Broth, rice, soup, vermicelli, etc., were brought in dirty kettles to the upper hall and there poured into silver bowls, out of which the patients were served.

The patients then numbered 510 to 532. "They were served by the most dirty, ragged, unfeeling and inhuman persons I ever saw. I once found eight or nine of them highly entertained with a delirious, dying patient. The Governor told me they had only twenty-two servants, and that

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many of them were debtors or criminals who fled there for refuge. At the same time I observed that near forty attendants were kept to take charge of about twenty-six horses and the same number of mules in the Grand Master's stables, and that all these were clean, a fountain with water running into a stone basin ; but though there was a fountain in the Hospital there was no water to it." The filth and smells, he adds, were so great that the head physician had to keep his handkerchief to his face as he went round the wards.

CHAPTER VII

THE LATTER YEARS IN MALTA

IF the last 200 years of the Knights' tenure of Malta was the period of their greatest worldly magnificence, it was, unhappily, that of their decadence. Undisputed sovereigns of Malta, and heroes in the eyes of Europe, thanks to the victory of the famous siege, with the declining power of the Turks they gradually lost those soldierly qualities which had so greatly distinguished them in their days of peril. Their vows of obedience, chastity and poverty were thrown to the winds ; while absence of work and enormous wealth, fostered luxury and licentiousness to such a degree, that even during La Cassière's Grand-Mastership his attempt to check these evils "led to an open revolt and his own imprisonment." And although laws were passed by successive Grand Masters, the Knights sank deeper and deeper into idleness and self-indulgence.

Naval warfare with the Turks, however, as well as against the corsairs and pirates of Northern Africa, went on without cessation through the

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17th and 18th centuries. Naval engagements constantly occurred, sometimes in conjunction with the ships of the Venetian Republic—as in the defence of Candia against the Turks. And in these sea-fights the Knights showed more of their better qualities and were highly successful. In the Chancery at St. John's Gate, a series of most interesting water-colours depict many of their combats. For the fleet still acted as a safeguard to the peoples and commerce of Europe.

But, unhappily, there was another and far darker incentive to this maritime activity. The frequent mention of galley-slaves during the 16th and 17th centuries shows that in Malta, as well as formerly in Rhodes where the Eastern custom prevailed, Turkish prisoners were reduced to slavery. And the galleys in Malta were entirely manned by these unfortunate creatures, who were also constantly engaged upon the vast fortifications and dockyards. Their lives were held so cheaply, that records of the Order show they were sacrificed without thought or pity. And further, the Order not only kept slaves for their own use, but sold numbers of them to anyone who required them. So that “the convent of St. John became eventually neither more nor less than a vast slave mart. When the demand was brisk and the supply scarce, the cruisers of the Order scoured the seas, and woe betide the unfortunate Turk who came within their range.”* Therefore the unceasing war at sea against the

* Porter.

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Turks was not so much on behalf of the defence of Christendom, as to fill the coffers of the Order and swell their private fortunes. And in the Record Office at Malta among various other letters from the Kings of England to the Grand Masters, is one from Charles II. to Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner, in which he begs to be admitted to the same privileges as those accorded to the Kings of France and Spain, to whom slaves were deported annually from Malta.

Although the English Langue had ceased there for more than a century, Charles seems to have been in frequent correspondence with Malta on matters connected with the navigation of the Mediterranean, and he dispatched a squadron thither on the subject, under Sir John Narborough. An entertaining account of the visit and disputes about salutes, was written by the chaplain of H.M.S. *Assistance*, her Captain saying when asked for a bill of health before entering port, that he had “no bill but what was in his guns’ mouths” —and thereupon calmly anchoring in the harbour. The point at last was satisfactorily settled. And the chaplain goes on to describe the “boates of ladys with their musick to our ship’s syde and bottles of wine with them!” The boats of fryars—and of musicians who “played severall lessons as they rowed gently round us.” And the courteous reception on shore. Ending his tale :

“ Thus wee, the Assistance and the new Sattée,
Do steare our course poynt blanke for Trypoly ;
Our ship new rigged, well stored with pigg and ghoose-a,
Henns, ducks, and turkeys, and wine called ‘ Syracoose.’ ”

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When the French Revolution swept Europe with its refining fire of destruction, and the new birth of the modern world, the decadent Order of the Knights of Malta, sunk in idleness, luxury, and self-indulgence, was unable to stand before it.

Emmanuel de Rohan, the sixty-eighth Grand Master—an aristocrat of the aristocrats, and a Frenchman of that great family whose head, only last year, laid down his life on the battle-field for Democratic France—was in power in 1792. The Order had already thrown in its lot with the French Monarchy. But in the first Constituent Assembly in Paris “the Order of St. John had been placed in the position of a foreign power holding property within the limits of the French kingdom, and as such was subjected to all the taxes imposed upon that kingdom. This step was soon followed by a decree enacting that any Frenchman becoming a member of any order of knighthood requiring proofs of nobility, should no longer be regarded as a French citizen.” And on September 19th, 1792, “it was enacted that the Order of Malta should cease to exist within the limits of France and that all its property (in France) should become annexed to the national domains.”*

The Order, under De Rohan, temporized—they neither broke with the French Directoire nor did they join those who strove to crush the Revolution. De Rohan in 1791 had been attacked by apoplexy, and though he partially recovered, he

* Porter.

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was unfit to guide the Order with energy in such a time as this. Homeless and destitute French Knights flocked to Malta and drained the treasury. While De Rohan stripped himself of his private resources, saying : “ Reserve one crown daily for the expenses of my table, and let all the rest be distributed among my distressed brethren.”

Meanwhile the Directoire had its eye on Malta as a desirable acquisition to France, both from its position and its strength. And emissaries were sent to sow discontent in the minds of the people and to tamper with the fidelity of the Knights.

At the worst of the crisis De Rohan died, in July, 1797—a charming and kindly gentleman of France, as his two portraits show us in the Chapter Hall at St. John’s Gate. And he was succeeded by the first German Knight ever to be raised to the Office of Grand Master—a very different type to the splendid d’Aubusson, de l’Isle Adam, or La Valette—by name Ferdinand von Hompesch. While every other country in Europe was preparing for the great expedition gathering at Toulon against Malta and Egypt, the island of Malta alone remained supine and indolent under such a chief. Warnings were given to Hompesch by the Order’s ambassador at the Congress of Rastadt, who told him roundly that he would be attacked, and must take all necessary measures of defence. Adding : “ Your own honour and the preservation of your Order are concerned in this matter. If you yield without defence, you will be disgraced in the eyes of all Europe.” But the wretched Grand Master,

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secure in his belief of the friendship of the French Republic, scorned all preparations against an attack, which he looked on as only the bugbear of timid politicians.

Therefore, when the storm burst in June, 1798, and Napoleon with his great fleet appeared before Malta, by ten o'clock on the 10th of June the whole outlying country was in the hands of the French, who landed at eleven different points. Treachery and panic within the city were at work. Hompesch "remained buried in his palace" with a single aide-de-camp. A mere feint of resistance was made. On the 11th an armistice of twenty-four hours was arranged by Junot, who, when the Grand Master was asked by his Secretary what preamble he should draw up, exclaimed roughly: "What preamble do you want?—four lines will settle the entire business, and those Poussielgue will dictate." And on the 12th Napoleon entered the town, exclaiming as he passed through the enormous fortifications: "It was well for us that we had friends within to open the gates, for had the place been empty, we should have had far more difficulty in entering."

Seizing the treasures of the church and the palace, he carried them off on his flag-ship *l'Orient*, together with the case and gauntlet-shaped monstrance of the most precious of all these treasures, the hand of St. John Baptist; while he placed the ring already mentioned on his own finger, and left "the dead hand," as he called it, to Hompesch. As *l'Orient* was sunk a few months later by Nelson,

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in the battle of the Nile, it is generally supposed, that most of the treasure of the Knights of Malta lies to this day at the bottom of the sea in Aboukir Bay.

This final disaster broke up the rule of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in the Mediterranean—the scene of their magnificent work in the defence of Christendom for so many hundred years. Many of them abandoned their profession and returned to their various countries. While a remnant, flying to Russia with the Grand Master von Hompesch, placed themselves under the protection of the Tsar Paul, who for many years had shown much sympathy with the Order, carrying with them their precious relic, the hand of St. John Baptist, which is—or was till last year—still in Petrograd.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM IN ENGLAND

THAT English Knights Hospitallers existed from the earliest days of the Order, is shown by the English Langue when the rules of the Order were first drawn up, at the end of the 11th century. But it was the gift in 1030 by Jordan de Brisset and his wife Muriel, of ten acres of land *juxta fontem clericorum*—near the Well of the Clerks of the City of London—which enabled the English Knights to build their chief house, the great Priory of Clerkenwell.

This well was on a steep bank and flowed down into the Fleet river below. For Clerkenwell stands much higher above the City than one would at first suppose. The Clerks' Well still exists, though now disused. And Mr. Fincham actually saw it years ago, when the houses which conceal it were rebuilt. It was latterly used as a pump well; and when covered in, the iron plate and spout were removed, and are set on the outside wall of St. James's Church, Clerkenwell, a hundred yards or so to the east. Going down the Clerkenwell

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Road towards the bridge over the railway, one turns to the right past the London Sessions House with its classic medallions by Nolekins, to the wide space of Clerkenwell Green ; and thence down the steep slopes which formed the banks of the Fleet river, to the railway line, where the second house on the right covers the Well of the Clerks. It is interesting to know that the Fleet, into which the Clerks' Well flowed, still brings its waters below ground from Hampstead Ponds, along the present line of the Metropolitan Railway at Farringdon Street, and discharges them into the Thames under Blackfriars Bridge. While on the same level, looking south towards the Dome of St. Paul's along the valley of the Fleet beyond the Clerkenwell Road, runs Turnmill Street parallel with the railway, where the mills stood belonging to the Knights.

The well, however, which gave its name to the great Priory, was not used by the Knights ; as their water-supply was conveyed by an elaborate system of leaden pipes from springs at Commandery Mantells, large meadows belonging to the Order at Barnsbury, now known as Pentonville. These springs also supplied the Charterhouse with water ; and in an old map of the water-supply, still preserved there, one may see it marked : " Here cross the St. John's pipes."

Jordan de Brisset and Muriel de Munteni seem to have been most generous in their pious works. Stowe says, and Dugdale confirms, that they also gave largely to the Priory of Clerkenwell—the

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house of the Black Nuns of the Assumption—beyond St. John's Priory, and bestowed on them "one peace of ground, thereby to builde a windmill upon; he and Muriall his wife were buried in the Chapter House there."* Muriel, in one charter regarding St. John's Priory, is called "domina donationis;" and according to a practice which Mr. Horace Round says existed at the time, she retained her own name after her marriage and handed it on to her daughters, as "a woman could not merely use her maiden name, but the name of her mother."†

Many other gifts of property rapidly added to the great wealth of the community in England. "Robert de Fun," says Dugdale, "gave the Brethren of this House the Hermitage of Yevelie, with a Condition that the said Brothers should admit him to their Order at such time as he pleased, whether in Health or Sickness."

In London alone, besides Clerkenwell, the Knights Hospitallers owned land at Hackney, Lincoln's Inn Fields, St. John's Wood, Highbury, Lisson Grove, with houses adjoining the Great Turnstile, also the "Ship Inn" in the Strand, now the site of the Law Courts.

In the country, the Manor of Hampton belonged to them. And buildings of the Order still exist in Derbyshire at Yearsley, in Essex at Maplestead, in Herefordshire at Dinmore, in Kent at

* Stowe, p. 360.

† J. H. Round, Esq., Communication to Society of Antiquaries.

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Swingfield and Sutton-in-Hone; at Poling in Sussex; Eagle and Temple Bruer in Lincolnshire; and Moor Hall in Middlesex, about four miles from Uxbridge, a most picturesque and attractive building. At North Baddesley, Hants, there is a former chapel of the Hospitallers; a plain rectangle, 53 feet long, containing "a fifteenth-century panelled altar tomb of a member of the Order, and it bears the cross of St. John several times repeated."* While at Clibburn in Northumberland "a small establishment," Mr. Clapham says, is still standing, which includes besides "a rectangular chapel, two ranges of domestic buildings placed on the sides of a quadrangle, the eastern part of which is open."

In England there were in all thirty-seven Commanderies and many lesser properties belonging to the Knights, some of which can now only be traced by their names. Indeed, a return in 1338, by the English Grand Prior to the Grand Master of the Order, Elyan de Villanova, shows that the Knights possessed more than ninety manors in England, including the property of the Templars. Most of this latter was given to the Hospitallers at the dissolution of that Order under Edward II. in 1315; "who," says Dugdale, "gave all their lands and possessions moveable and immoveable to these Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem."

In Scotland the chief house of the Order was

* Alfred D. Clapham, Esq.: "Transactions of St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society," Vol. VII., Part 11.

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Torphichen, under the Preceptor of Torphichen. And here, the church is one of the most remarkable monuments of the Hospitallers in these islands. "The existing structure is the central tower and transepts of a cruciform church, about 150 feet long, of which the nave and choir have disappeared, but the most extraordinary feature is the placing of a whole range of domestic apartments above the vault of the tower and transepts."*

In Ireland the Order was far more widely spread, under a Grand Prior. And we find it had twenty-one Commanderies, with its Grand Priory at Wexford, until the dissolution of the Templars threw Kilmainham into the hands of the Order, which was henceforth its chief house.

The first houses of Sisters of the Order were the Commanderies of Swingfield, Hampton, Standon in Herts, and Gosford in Oxon. But in the year 1180, Henry II. removed them to the Priory and Preceptory of Buckland in Somersetshire, known variously as Mynchin Buckland, or Buckland Sororum, in the vale of Taunton Dean. And this remained their only house until the dissolution of the Order in England.

Innumerable bequests and gifts were made to this Priory, of which Fina was the first Prioress, who died in 1240, having governed the house for sixty years and outlived seven successive heads of the Order. And in the window on the Chancery landing at St. John's Gate, is a full-length portrait of the good Fina. Chief among its benefactors

* Clapham.

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was Loretta, Countess of Leicester, widow of Earl Robert, who gave "to God and the Blessed Mary and St. John Baptist, and to the Blessed Poor of the Hospital house of Jerusalem for the Sustentation of the Sisters of Bockland, and for the finding of a Chaplain to celebrate daily in the greater Church at Bokland at the Altar of the Blessed Virgin for the health of my soul and of Lord Robert, my husband, sometime Earl of Leicestre, and for the health of the souls of my father and mother, and of all my ancestors and successors, all my land of Notestone and all my land of Ynesford this side of the water and that side of the water, and sixty-four acres of my demesne above Ruwedone and all my land of Ridescote, and of Hele, and of Charlecote, and of Tunecote, and of Boteburne, and all the land which Philip at Way holds with the tenants of the afore-said land, etc., etc. . . . To be had and possessed freely and quietly in perpetual and pure alms, as any alms may be freely and quietly given."*

We find also that many grants were made to the Sisters, allowing them cartloads of dead wood from the Parks of Neuton and Perton. And in 1276 the Sisters had "common of pasture for eight oxen and two cows" at Rolneston.

The head of the English Knights was entitled the Grand Prior. He was not necessarily a Church dignitary, although some of the Grand Priors were in Holy Orders. His position was

* "Mediæval Nunneries in the County of Somerset," Thomas Hugo, F.S.A.

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recognized as one of great importance ; for he was Chief Baron of England, and took precedence of all other lay barons in the House of Lords ; while he frequently filled great offices of State, such as Lord Admiral and Lord High Treasurer. The Grand Prior was responsible to the Grand Master of the Order. Clerkenwell, as were all the other Commanderies of the Hospitallers, was also governed by a Commander, who in the absence of the Grand Prior had complete authority. Thus we read that Henry III. in January, 1268, authorized "the Prior of England, who is leaving for Scotland, to transfer his authority to Stephen Fulburn, Commander of Clerkenwell, until June 24th."*

The dignitaries of the English Langue were the Grand Prior of England, the Grand Prior of Ireland, the Bailiff of Eagle or Aquila, and the Preceptor of Scotland.

It must be remembered that the chief business of the Knights Hospitallers, in their double character of fighting men and servants of the sick and oppressed, was centred in the Mediterranean. Therefore the great Priory of Clerkenwell, though it possessed a fine hospital, mainly served as a house of entertainment. As such it was used by the Kings when they came from Windsor, their chief residence, as there was no royal dwelling-place in London, save the Palace of Westminster and the Tower, until St. James's Palace was built by Henry VIII. in 1532. And the King had the

* Fincham, p. 16.

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right not only of dining with the Lord Prior whenever he wished, but of sending such members of his household and court thither whenever it suited him. While all distinguished visitors from overseas were entertained there. Thus it was at Clerkenwell that Henry II. in 1185 assembled his Barons in council, to consider the proposal of Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, that Henry should accompany him to Palestine in the new Crusade he had come to preach. And while staying at the Priory, Heraclius consecrated the newly-built Church of St. John, as well as the Temple Church in the Strand. King John stayed here for a month in 1212. Prince Edward and Eleanor of Castile were guests in 1265. In 1399 Henry IV. spent a fortnight at the Priory before his coronation. For when, the Chronicler says, Henry Duke of Lancaster "returned from his war, the Duke entered London by the chiefe gate and rode through the Cheape to St. Paules, where he was after lodged in the Bishop's Palace five or six days, and after at St. John's without Smith-field, where he remained right willingly."

"Quand le Duc Henry arrive
Fu à Londres nouvellement,
À Saint Pol à la droitement,
Et puis à Saint Jehan apres.
Qui est hors des murs assez pres.
C'est un hopital des templiers.
La fu le Duc moult voulntiers
Quinze jours tous pleins sans partir."*

* From a French Metrical History of the Deposition of Richard II. For the sake of a rhyme the French rhymester has made a misstatement. For St. John's never belonged to the Templars.

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In the third year of Henry IV., "the Emperour Constantine came unto England," and he "was lodged atte the hous of Saynt John in Smithfield." And a few years later we find Henry IV. actually living at St. John's, where he had dwelt in such comfort "moult vountiers" before his coronation. Altogether the Priory seems to have been a most useful and agreeable hotel for the Kings of England and their guests.

But it is equally evident that they paid right royally. Rich in lands and moneys as were the Grand Prior and Brethren of St. John's, they illustrated the truth that to those who have shall more be given. For they enjoyed extraordinary privileges, and many were the Charters bestowed on them.

The Letters Patent of Henry VII., dated 4th November, 1486, recently published in facsimile at St. John's Gate, confirm the Letters Patent of Edward IV.; which in their turn confirm those of Richard II. Richard II. confirms the Charters of Edward III., of Edward II., and of Edward I.; who confirms two Charters of Henry II., dated 20th June, 1253, and 25th June, 1253.

The Charter of Henry VII. says: "Know ye well that we have granted and in this present Charter have confirmed to God, the blessed Mary, and St. John Baptist and the Brothers of the Hospital of Jerusalem all the reasonable gifts of land, men and alms granted to them conferred on them by our predecessors, or by others in time past, or by us in the present Charter, or shall be

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conferred in the future by kings or any of them sevralty, or have been acquired in any other manner as well as churches as in worldly things and possessions. Wherefore our will is and we firmly order that the aforesaid Brothers shall have and hold all their men, possessions and alms together with all their liberties and free customs and quittances in woodland, meadows, pastures, waters, and mills, in ways and paths, and ponds, pools and fish ponds, in marshes and fisheries, in granges and orchards within the burgage and without. . . . We also grant for ever that the aforesaid Brothers be quit of all amercements which they and all men may be liable to in respect of scot, geld and all aids of King, Sheriffs and all their ministers.”

Further among other privileges it is set forth “that the Brothers of the Hospital and all their men be free and exempt from all toll in every market and in all fairs, and in the passage of all bridges, ways and of all the seas, through all our realms and all our lands. . . . Moreover we grant that all animals which are called waif found in the fee of the hospitalers belong to the Brothers, unless someone should pursue them who is willing and able to prove they are his property, and unless he take them within reasonable time and has sought after and pursued his property in the customary manner.”

The Letters Patent end thus :

“We ratify and confirm them to our beloved in Christ, John Weston, now Prior of the Brothers

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of the Hospital aforesaid, and their successors, as the aforesaid letter and Charters reasonably testify. In testimony of which thing we have caused these Letters patent to be made.

“Witness myself at Westminster the 4th day of November in the second year of our reign.”

THE PRIORY OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

The great Priory of St. John of Jerusalem at Clerkenwell must have been very extensive even from the earliest days, judging by traces of foundations and walls of that period which have been discovered by excavations. Its precincts extended from what is now Clerkenwell Green on the north, to the Gatehouse—the principal entrance to the Priory—on the south. And from St. John's Street on the east, to Red Lion Street on the west, covering some ten acres of ground. The boundary wall ran eastward from the Gate “until it reached St. John Street, then northward almost as far as the corner of Aylesbury Street, where it turned west to Clerkenwell Green, the north postern opening in it at Jerusalem Passage. . . . From its most westerly point on Clerkenwell Green, the wall turned south behind the houses on the east side of Red Lion Street, until it met the wall running westward from the Gate.”*

Unhappily, nothing remains of the twelfth-century buildings and work, save the crypt below the present Church of St. John. This church is

* Fincham, p. 40.

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only the choir of the former Priory Church ; and its hideous west front, erected in 1721 by Simon Michel, who faced the wall of Queen Mary's time, gives no idea of the treasures it hides within and beneath its walls. When first built between 1130 and 1185, the church had a round nave even larger than that of the noble Temple Church. It was sixty-five feet in diameter, surrounded by columns which supported the roof ; with a short, narrow choir of three bays and an apsidal end. This church closely resembled that of Little Maplestead, Essex, which is now happily once more the property of the Order. After the consecration of St. John's Church by Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in 1185, this choir was lengthened by two more bays, and aisles were added. And this addition seems to have corresponded with the work of later date in the crypt. For as Mr. Fincham has pointed out, "in the collection of worked stones, preserved in the crypt, there are many of the triple-clustered shafts, and rib-mouldings identical with those still standing ;"* which must have come from the upper building, as the crypt is intact. Mention is also made of the building of cloisters in 1283-4, by Prior William de Henley. These must have been on the south side of the church.

The round nave unfortunately disappeared subsequently—probably during the Wat Tyler Rebellion, 1381, when, as Froissart tells us, "they went to the house of the Knights-Hospitallers of

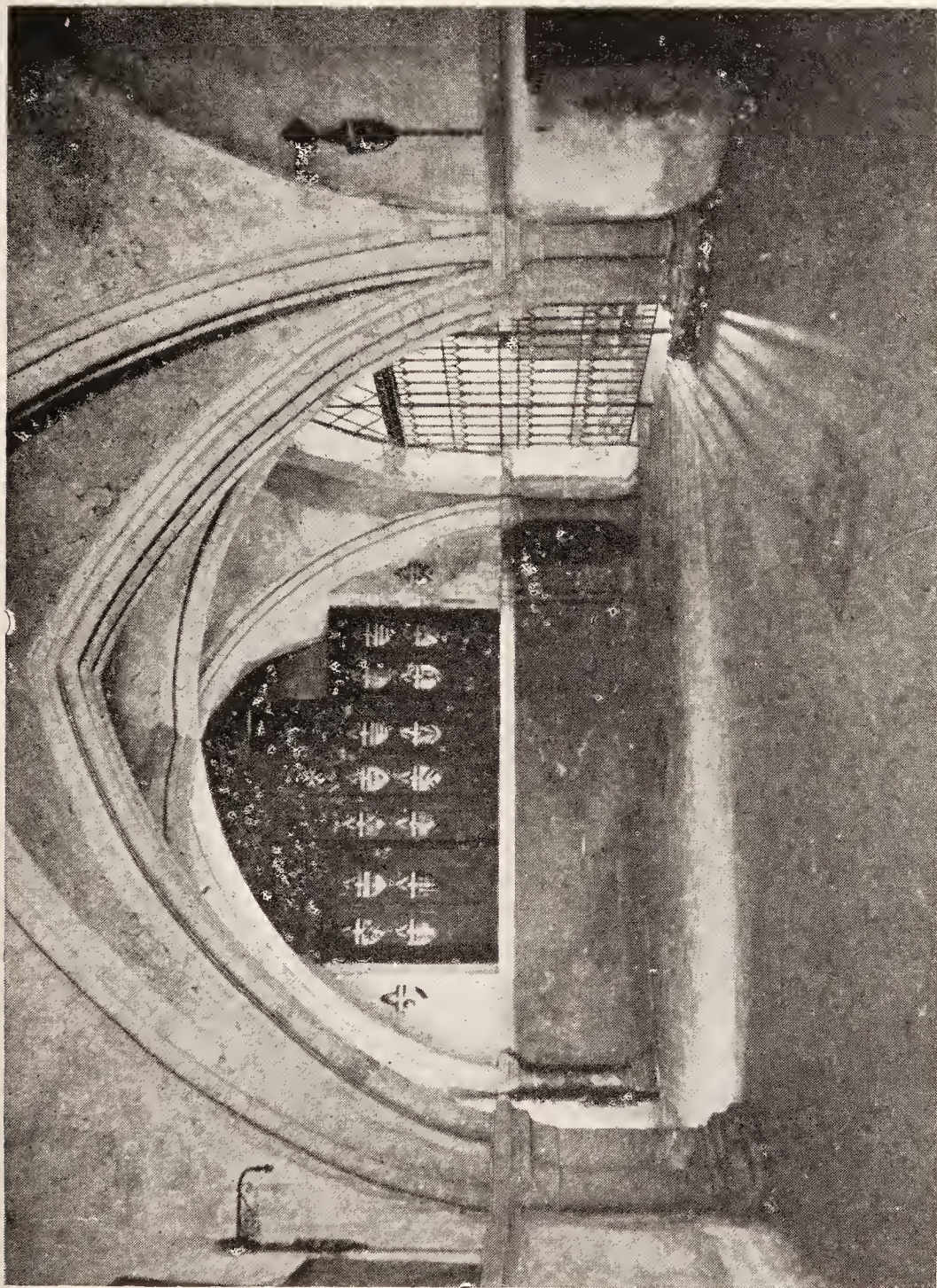
* *Id.*, p. 56.

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Rhodes, dedicated to Saint John of Mount-Carmel, which they burnt, together with their church and hospital." While Stowe adds that "the rebels of Offer and Kent, 1381, set fire on this house, causing it to burne by the space of seaven dayes together, not suffering any to quench it." They also destroyed the Prior's house, "built like another Paradise." And—even more important—they captured the unfortunate Grand Prior, Sir Richard Hales, who, with Simon of Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, they beheaded on that spot of sinister memories, Tower Hill.

The round nave was replaced by one of the usual rectangular form. And in 1911, Mr. Fincham discovered the foundations of the north wall of this nave below ground in St. John's Square, showing that it was some ninety feet in length. At the north-west corner of this nave stood the great tower described by Stowe; and much of its foundations exist below ground, its position being now marked in the pavement outside No. 46, St. John's Square. This tower was built by "William Massett, Citizen and Grocer of the Parish of St. Sepulchre's without Newgate, in the City of London," who in 1501 bequeathed the sum of £3 6s. 8d. "to the building of the steeple of St. John of Jerusalem in England, nigh to West Smithfield."

As we stand on the steps of the church and look over the open space of St. John's Square, where huge motor lorries are being loaded all day long from the warehouse of the Order, with



[By H. W. Fincham, Esq.]

Crypt of the Church of St. John, Clerkenwell.

[To face p. 96.]

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bales of requisites for the sick and wounded, we may trace the mark of the great round nave in the pavement. And a strong desire arises in our hearts that the Order might some day be enabled to rebuild it upon its ancient foundations, by sweeping away the houses of "mean streets" which impinge upon its stately circle.

It is but a dream. Yet one that might haply come to pass when peace once more broods over the world.

The crypt is entered from without, through the railings below the west front. And half-way down the steps which lead to it, one's attention is instantly arrested by a singular mass of rugged stonework, projecting apparently from the foundations of the church. This, and a similar mass on the opposite side within the door to the crypt, are all that remain to-day of the round nave, whose floor was four or five feet below the level of the floor of the choir.

But when one enters the crypt itself, all regrets for what is lost vanish in thankfulness that so much remains intact. For the very neglect of the crypt has been its salvation. The noble Norman work is virtually untouched, the mouldings of the arches and ribs as clean cut to-day as they were close upon eight hundred years ago. Yet the whole of this crypt was buried to a depth of two to three feet, reaching half-way up the shafts, with earth, rubbish, bones and broken coffins, until twenty-nine years ago, when, thanks

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to the devotion of Mr. Fincham and his personal labour, the clearance was gradually made. Indeed, to reach the base of the first shaft, he had to dig through a broken empty coffin. For the crypt from about 1723 had been used, according to the general custom in London, as a burial-place for the parishioners. "The coffins were lowered through a trap door in the little vestry behind the church, and thence carried through the hole in the east wall of the crypt and piled in stacks on the floor . . . about 1860 they were removed into the two chambers on the north side and walled up, where they remained until 1894, when an Order in Council was made for their removal, and, to the number of about 325 bodies, they were reinterred " at Brookwood.*

It was then that the restoration of the beautiful crypt was made possible.

The three first and earliest bays of the crypt are of plain Norman work. The main semicircular arches are square, standing on square projecting pilasters, the transverse arches simply moulded, and the vaulting of rubble. On the main arches is a curious dog-tooth moulding of applied plaster. And—as we may see more clearly upon fragments in the little museum—the stone of these three early bays was in places coloured red and blue, and gilded. A low stone bench runs along this early work; and in each bay there is a small window, in some of which the original iron bars are still in place.

* Fincham, p. 72.

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Beyond these three early bays are two of transitional work; the arches are pointed and moulded, supported on clustered triple shafts with moulded caps and bases. In all of these no trace of colour is found.

The floor was tiled; and at the north-east corner of the nave one tile is still in place against the base of the pilaster. While others, bearing fleur-de-lys or the eight-pointed cross in many different designs, are to be seen in the little museum.

The south aisle of the crypt—now the chapel of St. John Almoner—is of the same transitional work, and corresponds with the additions to the choir above. It is lighted by a three-light window at the east end, with small lancet windows in the south bays. And here we find that some of the piers are square to the wall, while others are placed at an angle.

This aisle is now used as the Communion Chapel of the Order of St. John; and memorial tablets of deceased members are placed on the walls. It is shorter than the nave by two bays. The remaining portion beyond its western wall is all solid earth; being therefore the only part below the floor of the choir above in which burials could have taken place. And Mr. Fincham has pointed out that some years ago, when an “excavation was made for the purpose of examining the walls and three medieval skeletons were found in this earth, one of the skeletons was minus its skull. It is on record that Grand Prior Langstrother was taken prisoner and beheaded after the battle of

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Tewkesbury, by Edward IV., A.D. 1471, and that he was buried in the church of St. John, Clerkenwell. It is, therefore, quite possible that these were the remains of Grand Prior Langstrother, and that King Edward had placed his head among those of other traitors on London Bridge.’’*

The two chambers on the north side of the nave are of much more simple construction than the rest of the crypt, having a plain barrel vault without ribs or piers. They are entered by a doorway from the north transept. And as the second or western one shows the remains of a small lancet window in its east wall (the doorway below is modern), with an aumbry on either side indicating the presence of an altar, it was probably used as a chapel, while a stone door frame in the north wall must have led up to the Prior’s house. This, it is suggested, may possibly have been the Chapel of the Grand Prior, before Docwra built his more important chapel on the north side of the choir about 1500.

These two chambers are now utilized as a museum for many fragments of the ancient buildings—a collection which is constantly being added to by the watchful care of those at The Gate, who lose no chance of precious findings if old houses are pulled down or foundations dug in the precincts. Though, alas! too many have already been used merely to build into modern walls. And Mr. Fincham relates that old inhabitants told him “when the Clerkenwell Road was being

* Fincham, p. 72.

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made, they saw many stone walls removed, and that large quantities of arch stones and columns were thrown into the foundations of the Penny Bank Buildings.”* These evidently formed part of the cloisters to the south of the church.

Many triple clustered shafts are to be seen here, and rib mouldings and stone carvings which still bear the colours and gilding with which they were adorned. And among them is a very beautiful twelfth-century capital of white marble, which is of special interest, as it has been recognized as coming—probably as a donation—from the Mother House of Rhodes. For the workmanship was vouched for by visitors from the island at the Coronation, as being that of Eastern Europe.

In the glass cases many objects of interest are to be seen, which have been gathered together from buildings which belonged to the Priory, or were actually found in excavations within the precincts. Here we see handsome encaustic tiles belonging to the pavement of the church. Fine glasses; and a curious baptismal bowl of *lignum-vitæ*, lined with iron and inscribed, “St. John Clerkenwell. Deo et sacris.” Fragments of pottery; and a vase found in the actual foundations of the Priory with mortar attached to it, which must have contained coins when the foundations were first laid. But, perhaps, to many the most quaintly interesting relics in the cases are a large knife and a number of freshwater mussel

* Fincham, p. 76.

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and snail shells, from the “ ffisshe pool in the same orchard lying upon the Easte and Northe part of the same mansyon,” which is mentioned in Lord Lisle’s “ Request to Purchase ” of 1546. These together with some oak piles, now standing against the wall, which evidently formed part of a fishing-stage, were discovered during excavations in 1903, in the deep black mud 15 to 18 feet below the present surface—as were a number of short clay pipes of antique form—exactly corresponding with the position of the fish-pond. The site is now covered by Messrs. Pfiels’ buildings, in St. John Street.

CHAPTER IX

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ORDER IN ENGLAND

NOTWITHSTANDING the disasters of Wat Tyler's rebellion, the wealthy Order of St. John in England must have rapidly restored the buildings of their famous Priory; and it is evident that the Knights were at the height of their prosperity at the beginning of the 16th century. In 1502, Henry VII. was elected Protector of the Knights of Rhodes, and frequently visited the Priory. While the Lord Prior, Sir Thomas Docwra (1501-1527), spent large sums in rebuilding and beautifying it. He it was who built the beautiful Gate House, now the most important building which remains intact of those belonging to the ancient Priory. This is also of special interest, apart from its history, as being the only gate-house in London which spans a street. He also rebuilt the tower of the church, and inserted the perpendicular windows which now remain in what was then the choir. And he added on the south side of the choir "my lord Dockery's chapel, which is in length 12 yards,"

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and the vestry adjoining, which led into the choir by the small doorway now opening from the second bay from the east end. While we must suppose that the buildings adjoining the choir on the north of the church, as seen in Hollar's engraving of 1656, are also due to him.

In the earlier days of the reign of Henry VIII.—of unblest memory—Prior Docwra was in high favour, sitting as Premier Baron of the Realm in “his first Parliament, and being employed on various embassies and commissions.”* In a delightfully quaint print designed by Garter King-at-Arms, in Fiddes' “Life of Cardinal Wolsey,” 1724, we may see Lord Prior Docwra sitting as first and head of the Temporal Barons in Henry VIII.'s Parliament, facing the King, and distinguished by a double collar of ermine falling over the back of his black robes. While we learn further that his stockings were red and his shoes black. He received the valiant Philip Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Grand Master of the Order, when he came to England during his journey to the various courts of Europe to beseech help to regain the island of Rhodes; and King Henry came to visit him at the Priory, when he promised the guns already mentioned.

But now began Henry VIII.'s disputes with the Pope. And the King endeavoured to win away the allegiance of the English Knights from the Grand Master of the Order, by tempting them to become his own Knights, while the defence of Calais

* Fincham, p. 18.

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as their special mission was held out as a bait. In 1527, at Docwra's death, Henry further tried to force a favourite of his own upon the English Knights as Prior, and to exact from them a yearly tribute of £4,000. But in all these attempts he met with no success from this high-spirited and powerful body; and he was obliged at last to accept their own nominee as Lord Prior. This was Sir William Weston, the same gallant Knight who had fought through the siege of Rhodes, and who had commanded the *Great Carrack, Santa Anna*, which carried the Knights three years later to Malta.

No wonder, therefore, is it, that when Henry VIII. had dissolved the religious houses of England, he should make short work of the English Knights Hospitallers, who had dared to withstand his will and whose vast possessions were so tempting a prize. Therefore, as Stowe says bluntly, "The King tooke into his own handes all the landes that belonged to that house and that Order, where-soever in England and Ireland, for the augmentation of his crowne." And in 1540 it was enacted that "the Kinge's Majestie, his heirs and successors, shall have and enjoy all that Hospitall, Mansion-house, and all other houses, edificions, buyldinges and gardienes of the same belonging, being nere unto the citie of London, in the County of Midd., called the house of St. John of Jerlm. in England," which was valued as, Stowe says, at £262 19s. a year.

The members of the Order were forbidden to use

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any of its titles or to wear the dress. Sir William Weston, however, was granted a pension of £1,000 a year. But the Royal funds were not long diminished by this concession. For, as it is quaintly put, "It fortuned on the 7th day of May, 1540, being Ascension Day, and the same day as the dissolution of his house, he was dissolved by death, which strooke him to the heart at the first time when he heard of the dissolution of his Order. Soul smitten with sorrow, gold, though a great cordial, being not able to cure a broken heart."*

The gallant and heart-broken Sir William Weston was buried in the choir of St. James's Church on Clerkenwell Green, once belonging to the Priory of the Black Nuns of the Assumption, of which the good Jordan de Brisset and Muriel his wife were such generous benefactors. A magnificent tomb was erected over his grave. But this was destroyed when the church was rebuilt, and only the recumbent figure—painfully emaciated and mutilated—was preserved, and replaced on an altar tomb in 1882 by a descendant.

A great number of the Knights fled to Malta. While several of those who dared to remain in England were beheaded according to the amiable practice of the time. Among those who thus suffered was Sir Adrian Fortescue, of whose portrait in the Oratory of St. John's Church, Malta, by Preti, the painter-Knight of Malta,† a photograph hangs in the Museum of the crypt at Clerkenwell.

* Weever's "Funeral Monuments." † See Chapter V.

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As already stated, nothing exists of the original buildings of the Priory save the crypt. There is no guide to show us what the twelfth-century buildings were like; although, thanks to the devoted and watchful work of some members of the Order, traces have been found by excavation, which show certain of the walls of the precincts, giving some idea of the extent of ground they covered.

The engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar in Dugdale's "Monasticon" is, so far as can be ascertained, the oldest representation which exists of the Priory; although many later and wholly fictitious drawings are to be found. But, to show their worthlessness, one of these in Hone's "Every Day Book" was declared to come from a Cottonian MS., and "on referring to this in the British Museum it will be found that the manuscript and picture relate to St. John's Monastery at Colchester."* Again, in the Pictorial Map of "London in the Olden Times," published in 1855—one of the worst periods of antiquarian inaccuracy in popular works—a wholly imaginary design of the Priory appears; while many other artists have drawn upon their fertile imaginations in portraying what the Priory of St. John might have been.

The Hollar print, therefore, is all we have to depend on; and according to the best authorities it seems to be fairly accurate. Though, at the same time, we must remember that this drawing was made over a hundred years after the

* Fincham, p. 37.

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dissolution of the Order, when much of the Priory had been destroyed, such as the great tower under Edward VI. and the greater part of the church. In any case, however, it gives us some notion of the stately and extensive buildings of the Tudor period. The view of the east front is particularly interesting, showing the east end of the choir and the crenellated buildings and square towers of the Priory adjoining on the north, which formed the main block of the establishment, with stretches of garden between them and the wall of the precincts, whose foundations now run along St. John Street.

The only guide giving a fairly definite account of the buildings before the Priory was suppressed, is found in a most valuable and interesting Manuscript lately discovered by A. W. Clapham, F.S.A. This was preserved at Losely Hall, Guildford, among the MSS. of the Carwarden and More families, Sir Thomas Carwarden being Master of the Revels to Henry VIII. and Edward VI.

This document is entitled "The surveye of Leade belonging to Seynt Joens in Smythfeild."

"It begins *first a house called the priest's dortor covered all with lead the roof thereof is in length 6 times 20 feet.* This can only be the dormitory of the knights . . . and with a length of 120 feet, it must have been an imposing apartment. Next follows another roof *which is called the Armoury that is in length 18 yards and in depth 3 yards and a foot on either side of the ridge.* It must have been a narrow building 54 feet by about

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15 feet. The roof *on the greate chamber dore and on the great stair*, 25 by 30, is next mentioned with *the roof of the greate chamber and divers other chambers 120 long by 15 feet on either side of the ridge*. Other chambers 34 feet by 15, 21 by 15, and a third 34 feet, follow, and the next entry of interest is a *little roof over the Stillytornes*, or Distillery. The *Comptying House* and other chambers were 36 feet in length, and the wardrobe was 15 feet square. The next entries include the Prior's Lodging, mention being made of *my lorde's chamber*, the parlour 28 feet long, and *the Keper's chamber*. The great hall of the Priory, corresponding to the monastic Frater, was 105 feet long and 30 feet on either side of the ridge. The building which follows is described as having *a tiled roof which was called the Yoman's Dorter that hath gutters of leade round about it and also gutters on the kechyn*. This structure is of considerable interest as implying the provision of regular accommodation for a lower grade of the Order, the body servants of the Knights, analogous to the 'domus conversorum' of Cistercian planning."*

Some further knowledge of the various buildings is to be gained from the document "A Request to Purchase," dated April 5th, 37 of Henry VIII. And the grant made by Henry VIII. on the 1st May, 1546. The property is described as the "Scyte off the pryory called Saint Johns of Jerlm. in England," and enumerates "the fferme of the scyte . . . and precynt of the hous and mansyor

* Clapham.

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place of the late pryory of hospitall of Saint Johns Jerlm. in England in the countie of Midd. and of all houses chambers cellars . . . barnes stables and all other buildyngs, gardens, orchard, pond . . . and the Gate house covered of leads . . . of the precynt of the Scyte and mansion. . . . The lane belonging to the same scyte called Saint Johns Lane and the tenement next the garden of the said mansyon . . . upon the south. Within which scyte over and besides the house and mansyon place, next the kechyns, bier house, bake houses and all other houses of offyce belonging to the said mansyon, as they be compacte and edifyed together within the precynt . . . and bounds of the same scyte . . . that is to say gardens and one orchard next a ffisshe poole in the same orchard lying upon the Easte and Northe parte of the said Mansyon place. Itm. one garden called the turcoplyer's garden adjoining to the aforesaid garden called the supprior's garden. Itm. certain voyd ground called the wood yarde. Itm. the Slaughter house and the yard belongyng to the same . . . the plomers house and other buyldyngs adjoining to the same.

“ Itm. one house lately buyldid by John Mables-ton, clerke (he had been sub-Prior) called the supprior's lodgyng, and one garden called the supprior's garden, which house and garden be grauntyd to the said John for terms of hys lyffe by acte of Parlyament, wtoute anythyng thereof paying. . . . Itm. one house adionyng to the said house called the schole house. Itm. two Courtes,

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whereof the one is called the great Courte, and the other the lyttle Courte, lying upon the southe parte of the said mansyon as they be enclosed.”*

The value of the Priory at the dissolution was placed at £2,304 19s. 11d., only therefore exceeded by the valuations of Westminster and Glastonbury Abbeys. In the Cotton MSS. we find a paper “Touching St. John’s,” headed “An abridgement touching the money, plate, stuff, store and payment at St. John’s.” “Plate, gilt 9,592½ ounces., parcel gilt 1,903½ ounces. Paid for servants’ wages, their rewards, charge, about the funeral, and other £281 14s. ; remainder in ready money £588 6s. 8d. besides ornaments of the Church remaining in the vestry, stuff delivered to the King, stuff remaining in St. John’s charged to Sir Henry Knevett, stuff to be sold, wine, three carts and four cart horses.”†

The funeral mentioned must evidently have been that of the heart-broken Grand Prior, Sir William Weston.

But a more detailed inventory, that of the “maister and Treasurer of the King’s Jewells,” shows many of the Priory treasures which passed into the greedy hands of Henry VIII. “Frome the late monastery of St. John’s in Smythfildes, viz., in gilte plate, weing wt the stones, birralles, and glasses, DCCIIIIxx loz. di, and in white plate MⁱVi^oliiii oz. as by the saied booke apperethe, over and besides a gossell booke plated

* Privy seals, etc. May, 38 Henry VIII. Record Office.

† Fincham, p. 41.

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upon wt a crucifix, Mary and John of silver, and a texte of a gospell booke plated uppon wt silver Mary and John, the silver of whiche bookes are chardged in the saied title of mytors as in the same dothe appear.” It would be deeply interesting to know whether any of the gilt or silver plate is still known of in England ; as it is sure to be decorated or marked with the eight-pointed cross of the Order, or with arms of the Grand Priors.

Stowe gives an interesting account of the neighbourhood after the dissolution of the Order. “ Many fayre houses of Gentlemen and others are now builded about this Priorie, especially by the highway towards Iseldon. So much of the Church which remaineth (for one great Ile thereof fell downe) serveth as a Parish Church of St. John, for not only the Tenements and neare inhabitants, but also (as is aforesaid) for all up to Highgate Molwell,” etc.

It appears that Lord Lisle never came into actual possession of the Priory. For Stowe relates that “ the Priory, church and house of St. John was preserved from spoil and pulling down so long as Henry VIII. reigned, and was employed as a store house for the King’s toils* and tents for hunting, and for the wars, etc. But in the 3rd year of King Edward VI. the church for the most part, to wit the body and side ailes, with the great bell tower, a most curious piece of workmanship, graven, gilt, and enamelled, to the great beautifying of the city, and passing all others I have ever

* Nets.

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seen, was undermined and blown up with gunpowder. The stone thereof was employed in the building of the Lord Protector's house in the Strand." While the "faire stone porch" was removed to the Church of All Hallows, Lombard Street.

In the "Loseley Survey of Lead," the only mention of the tower is simply "a roof on the steeple, covered with leade." But in Wyngaerde's curious drawing of London, of which a copy is to be seen on the stairs leading to the Library at the Guildhall, the tower is shown as a massive structure with hipped roof supporting a square lantern.

Much as we may and do admire stately Somerset House, we cannot but wish that the Lord Protector had brought "the stone thereof" from elsewhere than the church and tower of St. John's. Indeed, Sir Henry Spelman, the antiquary, goes further than regret in his indignation at Somerset's sacrilege. For he says with regard to Clerkenwell, "as the leprosie with the Jews, so the curse of sacrilege cleaves to consecrated stones; and they become unsuccessful, so as the builder doth not finish his house nor doth his son inherit it."* And so Protector Somerset was beheaded for high treason, and the stately house built from ruined churches reverted to the Crown.

Although, as already shown, the buildings of the great Priory of St. John of Jerusalem have well-nigh disappeared, a walk through Clerkenwell

* "De non Temerandis ecclesis."

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is full of interest. For the Order has left its mark in all directions. Besides St. John's Lane, which is mentioned in the warrant of Henry VIII., and now leads, as it did then, from the south up to the Gate house, St. John's Street marks the eastern boundary of the ancient precincts. St. John's Square, now cut in two by the Clerkenwell Road and its tram lines, must probably have been part of the "Great Court," and also close to the church was the site of the Cloisters. While we find hard by St. John's Place, St. John's Passage, and even St. John's Gardens—a little unexpected open space, with trees and flower beds, behind the houses of the steep and narrow Benjamin Street just above the railway at Farringdon Street Station. In St. John's Lane we are reminded that the house of the third dignitary of the English Order—the Bailiff of Egle—stood on the site of a little slum now called Eagle Court. While, crossing the tramways of the Clerkenwell Road, a small passage leads out of St. John's Square into Aylesbury Street—Jerusalem Passage by name. This led to the north postern of the precincts. And here in 1903, behind Nos. 1 and 2 Clerkenwell Green, Mr. Fincham discovered "forty-three feet of the (original) wall standing, with a small doorway in it, 3 feet 9 wide."* And the north postern was a covered arched building, which was removed in 1780.†

Behind the east end of the church is a little churchyard which was the burial ground of the

* Fincham, p. 40.

† Fincham, p. 75.

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Priory. And just north of it where it opens on St. John's Street, during excavations in 1903 for the lofty houses now standing, the "ffisshe poole" in the orchards "lying upon the Easte and Northe of the same mansyon"—namely the Grand Prior's house—was found. For the gardens and orchard extended all along the east face of the Priory buildings within the wall of the precincts, as may be seen in Hollar's print.

Various inns and public houses still bear names in connection with the Order; the chief being an old inn known for some 200 years as "The Baptist's Head," and frequented by cattle drovers from Smithfield Market close by. It was once the house of Sir Thomas Forster, Judge of Common Pleas, who died there in 1612. And the handsome chimney-piece in the Chancery—an admirable specimen of English Renaissance work—was rescued from the tap-room of the inn when it was pulled down in 1895 to make room for its extremely commonplace successor, which, however, still bears the old name. But one often wonders what Clerkenwell must have been like before the endless factories spread far and wide over the precincts and neighbourhood of the great Priory—once the centre of brilliant life and ceremonial, when kings and princes of the Church, patriarchs and envoys visited it and enjoyed its magnificent hospitalities.

CHAPTER X

REVIVAL OF THE ORDER UNDER QUEEN MARY

BY the will of Henry VIII., the Priory of St. John was left to his daughter Mary. And in the second year of Edward VI.'s reign he granted to his sister by Letters Patent, the "scite, circuit, ambit, precinct, capital messuage and house, late of the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem." Though in the very next year, the Lord Protector Somerset destroyed the tower and greater part of the church—evidently excluded from the bequest—which must have been a bitter blow to her.

It appears, however, that during her brother's lifetime the "Lady Mary" used the Priory as a dwelling, whenever she stayed in London. For, thanks to a contemporary diarist, Henry Machyn, whose records of public events cover some thirteen years from 1550 to 1563, we learn a good deal with regard to her sojourn there.

In 1551, Machyn describes a state visit of Mary to her brother. "The XVIj day my lady Mary rode through from Saynt John's through Flett-street unto the court at Westmynster with many nobullmen of lordes and knightes and gentyllmen ;

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and at the court gate she alytted, and Mr. Wingfield, the comtroller of the kynge's house, and many lordes and knyghtes, and so she was brought through the halle unto the chamber of pressens, and so she tarried there, and ate a goodly banquet, ij and soon after she toke her horse and rod unto Saynt John's, and there she lay all nyght, and on the morrowe she rode to New Hall in Esex, and there bide in grace with honor thank be God and the kyng her brother. The XV day the Lady Mary rode through London unto St. John's, her place, with fifty knights and gentlemen in velvet coats and chains of gold afore her, and after her llj score gentlemen and ladies, every one having a peyre of bedes of black.* She rode through Chepe-syde and through Smythfield."

In 1552, Machyn again says: "The xj day of Juin came ryding to London my lade Mary's grace, through London unto Saynt Johns with a goodly company of gentyllmen and gentyllwomen. The xij day of Juin rode through London unto the Towre warffe my lade Mary grase, the kynge's sister, and toke her barge to Grenwyche, the kynge's courte; and so came at vj a cloke at ngyht, so landed at the Towre, and so unto Saunt John's, beyond Smythfeld." At new year 1553 she was again at St. John's, and visited her brother in state with a great cortège of lords and ladies. And six months later she became Queen, and left St. John's for her Palaces.

In 1555 there is a curious account in Grey Friars

* A rosary.

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Chronicle of London, how that “on the 29th day of August which was the day of the Decolacyon of Saint John Baptyst the Marchand Tayllers kept masse at Sant Johnes, beyond Smythfeld, and my lord of Sant Johnes did offer at masse and sir Hare Hubytthorne, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Master Harper, altherman, and all the clothing and after the iiij wardens of the yeomanry and the compane of tayllers, a id a piece; and the quyre hong with cloth of arras, and after masse to the Tayllers’ hall to dener.”

When the “lade Mary” succeeded her brother in July, 1553, as Queen of England, she had particular satisfaction in inviting the exiled Knights to return to their Priory, which had been her home in London. But they found the nave and tower of their Church destroyed, while the choir lay roofless and open to the weather. And Stowe says: “That part of the Quire which remained with some of the Chappels was by Cardinal Poole in the raigne of Queene Mary, closed up at the west end and otherwise repayred.”

Sir Thomas Tresham, who had meanwhile carried on the English Langue in Malta, was appointed Grand Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England. And the Order was once more revived by Queen Mary and Philip of Spain, by Royal Letters Patent, dated April 2nd, 1557, with all its dignities, ancient privileges and prerogatives.

Queen Mary’s Charter, after the usual lengthy

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preamble, declares that Cardinal Pole, “ according to these pious and just wishes of ours . . . has entered, replaced and reformed the said Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England to its former condition, and has also erected and instituted the Priory and Hospital . . . under the same title of St. John of Clerkenwell, which it possessed before the said dissolution, and has ordained and appointed our well-beloved Thomas Tresham, Knight, as Prior of the same Hospital ; and our well-beloved Richard Shelley, Turcopolier of the Turcopoliership, as commander and preceptor of Sliebec and Helston ; and also as commanders or preceptors, the fathers Felices de la Nucci, bailiff of the bailiwick of Aquila ; Cuthbert Laithen, of Newland ; Edward Browne, of Temple Bruer ; Thomas Thornel, of Willoughton ; Henry Gerard, of Ively and Barowe ; George Aylmer, of South Baddesleye ; Jacob Shelley, of Temple Coombe ; and Oliver Starkey, of Quenyngton.”

“ Know therefore that we, the aforesaid king and queen, not only approve of the above erection and institution of the same Order . . . but also earnestly desire that the same be considered as efficacious and valid in our law to all intents and purposes, on account of the special and sincere affection we bear to that Order and religion.

“ And further by our special grace and certain knowledge and decree, we ordaine and grant by these presents, for ourselves and the heirs and successors of our aforesaid queen, to the said

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Prior, bailiffs and commanders, and whatever other Prior, bailiffs or commanders of the Order may for the time being exist, and form a body corporate, in word and deed, under the title of the Prior and brethren of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England, to be so named and called of others in perpetuity ; and that they shall (be have) a perpetual succession.”

The revival of the Order in England was indeed but short lived, lasting only about a year, when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558. The Crown then immediately dissolved the Order in England once more, and seized their property. The Knights again fled to Malta. And there the English Langue continued to exist, and English Knights and Grand Priors were admitted, until Napoleon finally scattered the Order in 1798.

But Queen Mary's Letters Patent *have never been revoked*. This is a matter of deep interest and importance to the Order in England, as it exists to-day. The original document may be seen in the Public Library in Malta. And attested copies are kept in the Library at St. John's Gate.

The Lord Protector Somerset and his young King would seem to have satisfied their iconoclastic tendencies with regard to the Priory, by destroying the church and its tower. For the other buildings were untouched, as far as one can see, for many years after the second dissolution of the Order by

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Queen Elizabeth. It was then used as headquarters of the Drama. During her reign the occupant of the Priory was Edmund Tylney, who was Master of the Revels—then an important office—for thirty-one years under Elizabeth and James I., from July, 1579, till his death in 1610. Tylney was therefore closely associated with the greater part of Shakespeare's career, with whom he must have been in constant communication. For he licensed no less than thirty of the poet's Plays, beginning with *Henry IV.* and ending with *Antony and Cleopatra*. We may therefore picture many journeys by Shakespeare to the Gate and Priory.

It appears that the new Master of the Revels had some difficulty in taking possession of his dwelling. For in Tylney's "Accounts"* he says, "Edmund Tyllney, Esquire, Master of the said Office having by grant of her Majesty by Letters patent dated July in the xxjth year of Her Majesty's Reign the office of the mastership of the same office and mansion house with the appurtenances. The same office being specially appointed continued and used within the housing and precinct of St. Johns where all the store and furniture of the said office have been and is kept and remaining. The housing and rooms there appertaining to him being Employed that he cannot conveniently have the same. But is driven to hire."*

* The accounts of the Revels at Court in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. Edited by Peter Cunningham, Shakespeare Society, 1842.

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Tylney describes the buildings devoted to his army of workpeople, as consisting “ of a wardropp and other several Rooms for Artificers to work in, viz. : Taylors, Imbrotherers, Propertimakers, Paynters, Wyredrawers, and Carpenters, together with a convenient place for ye Rehearsalls, and setting forthe of Playes and other Shows for those services.” The rehearsals mentioned, took place in “ the Great Hall at St. John’s,” which was 105 feet long by 60 feet wide. In Tylney’s accounts there are endless mentions of St. John’s. In one place he asks for more money “ for new Presses to be made throwoute the whole storehowse, for that the olde were so Rotten that they coulde by no means be Repayred or made any waye to serve agayne. The Queenes ma’ties store lyeing on the floore in the store-howse which of necessitie must preasently be provyded for before other works can well Begin. Which press being made as is desired by the Officers wilbe a greate safegarde to the store preasently remaining, and lykewise of the store to coom, whereby many things may be preserved that other ways will be utterly lost and spoyled continually encreasing her Ma’ties charge.” £1 of the sum is not allowed, we see, “ for so much as the said presses are not begun.”

Other entries are : “ Cariage from the Watersyde to St. John’s Vjd. For cariage of certeyne pece of the wagon and mownte from the Warderob to Saint Jones ijs.” Then comes, “ For Cariadge of the partes of the well counterfeit from

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the Bell in gracious street * to St. John, to be pformed for the play of Cutwell; Xd.” And in 1578: “Two carres to carry the Mask from Pawles wharfe to St. Johns; xvijjd.” While on January 11th, John Garret and Dwaryns Martin were paid “for carryage of the Armoure from Greenewitch to St. Johnes to be guylded 2s., and from St. Johns to the Waterside 16d.” The players were to be kept warm at rehearsals; as there are items “for wood and cole laid into the office at St. Johnes for rehearsalls airings and works done vijd”—for “cotten candles of all sortes for the rehearsalls and works at St. Johnes”—and “for rushes for the great hall at St. Johnes.”

Two years after Tylney's death at Leatherhead, in 1610, James I. gave the house of St. John to Lord Aubigny, and allowed “Alexander Stafford, Clerk, Comptroller of the Tents and Revels, £15 per annum for house rent in lieu of it. The Revels Office was then removed to St. Peters-Hill.”†

Later on the Priory came into possession of William Cecil, Lord Burleigh; and from Fuller we learn that “his countess was very forward to repair the ruined choir.” The church was solemnly reopened on St. Stephen's Day, 1623. And when the Priory house passed by marriage and descent to Lord Aylesbury, the choir was known as Aylesbury Chapel, its owner living in the house on the north which we see in Hollar's print; while the

* Gracechurch Street.

† W. J. Pinks.

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entrance to the church was decorated by the flight of steps, and two Ionic pilasters supporting a mean little pediment above a pointed doorway. Fuller's account of the church in 1655 is amusing. "At this day though contracted, having the side aisles excluded . . . it is one of the best private chapels in England, discreetly embracing the mean of decency betwixt the extremes of slovenly profaneness and gaudy superstition."

In the early 18th century the church had become a Presbyterian meeting-house, which Bishop Burnet says was sacked during the Sacheverell riots—its contents being burned before the door. And in 1716 it was advertised for sale, as "The remains of the once famous Abbey of Clerkenwell, called of late Aylesbury Chapel, with a gallery as fit as any for a school-room that will hold above two hundred scholars."

At length in 1721, the unfortunate chapel was bought by Mr. Simon Michel, who perpetrated the present hideous west front and the galleries within. But frightful as the work of that time is to our modern eyes, we must not be ungrateful to the buyer. For otherwise the whole building, with its precious crypt, would almost certainly have gone the way of the rest of the Priory. And Mr. Simon Michel, two years later, gave a new Rectory house he had built in Red Lion Street, and sold the church to the Commissioners of Queen Anne's Bounty for £2,500, when it was reconsecrated as the Parish Church of St. John's, Clerkenwell.

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Though it may not be beautiful as a structure to-day, few London churches are more devoutly tended and cared for, than all that remains of the Priory Church of St. John of Jerusalem. The present Rector, the Rev. T. C. Elsdon, has presented several sets of beautiful vestments, old Italian crosses and candlesticks for the altars, and altar books specially and exquisitely bound at Tournai, for the church. While the cope, presented to the church in 1907, by Major H. E. Baskerville, a Knight of the Order, is one of the richest bits of modern work one can find, made by the Sisters of Bethany hard by. The fabric is cloth of gold damask, powdered with the eight-pointed white cross of the Order, sprigs of St. John's Wort, and crowned "J's," while the orphreys bear figures of St. John Baptist and St. John Almoner, and on the hood a representation of the Holy Family.

CHAPTER XI

THE GATE HOUSE

MANY were the vicissitudes of the beautiful old Gate House, before it came to its own as the headquarters of the Order in England.

To quote Mr. Fincham's admirable account : " In 1731 the Gate House was inhabited by a printer, Edward Cave, and here he printed and issued *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Dr. Samuel Johnson was for a long time its chief writer, contributing amongst other items the reports on the debates of the Houses of Parliament. Cave does not appear to have paid large salaries, for Johnson was so shabbily dressed that he took his meals behind a screen in the corner of Cave's dining-room when guests were present. At this period Johnson brought to the Gate a young friend with a taste for acting, and it was in the large room over the arch that David Garrick gave his first performance, in Fielding's farce of *The Mad Doctor*, founded upon Molière's *Malade Imaginaire*, to Cave's workmen and friends. In 1781, *The Gentleman's Magazine* was removed to

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Fleet Street, and the Gate became the Parish Watch House ; and later it became an inn with the name of ' The Old Jerusalem Tavern.' ”*

In 1845 the Gate House narrowly escaped complete destruction. It had grown so ruinous that the authorities ordered its demolition or its repair. Happily, a resident architect, Mr. W. P. Griffith—whose name should always be held in honour by those who love the Order—took up the matter, raised a public subscription, and restored the building to a condition of safety. In 1874 the freehold of the Gate House being for sale, the late Sir Edmund Lechmere—whose devotion and generosity to the Order is so well known, and who as a boy at Charterhouse had subscribed 5s. pocket-money to the restoration fund—bought it, and restored it to the Order. “ In the same year they were able to use the western tower, but it was not until 1887, that the expiration of leases allowed the Order to obtain full possession.”†

As already stated, the great Gate House, which was the principal approach to the Priory through the wall enclosing the precincts, was built by Grand Prior Docwra in 1504. It consists of two large towers four stories high, joined by a fine archway spanning St. John's Lane, with a large room above it. These towers are flanked on the inner or northern side by two smaller towers containing the staircases. The whole is built of red brick encased in Kentish ragstone, except in the flat walls of the archway, where the beautiful

* Fincham, p. 44.

† Fincham, p. 45.

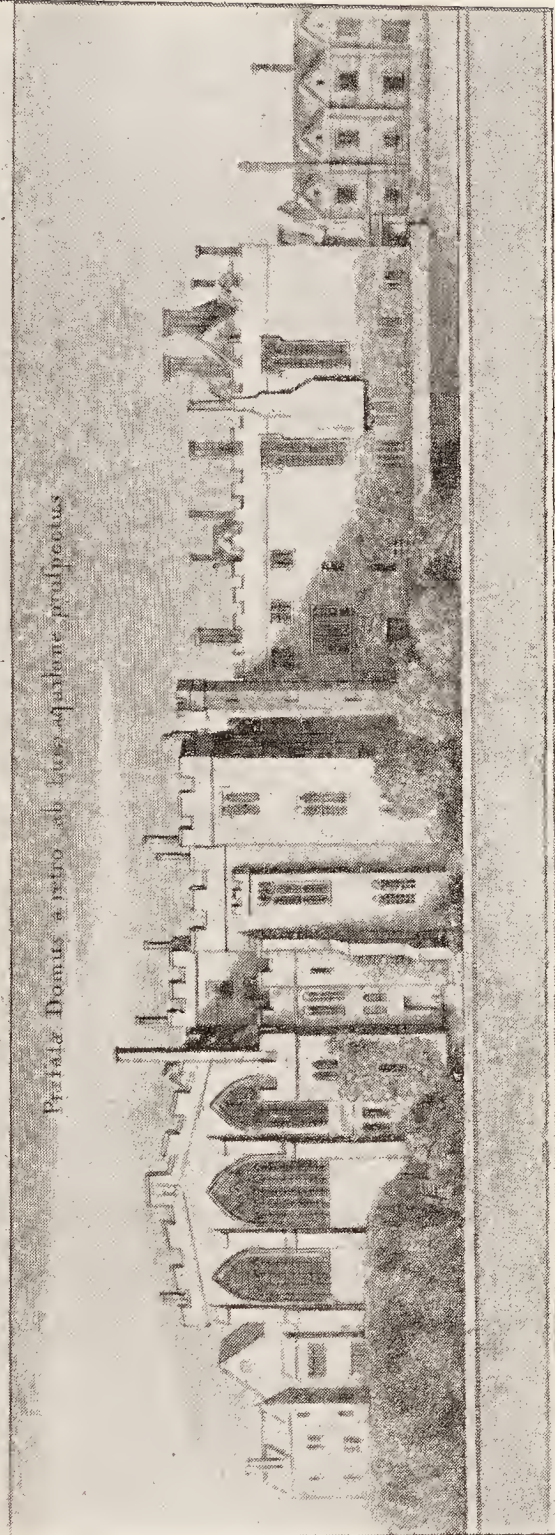
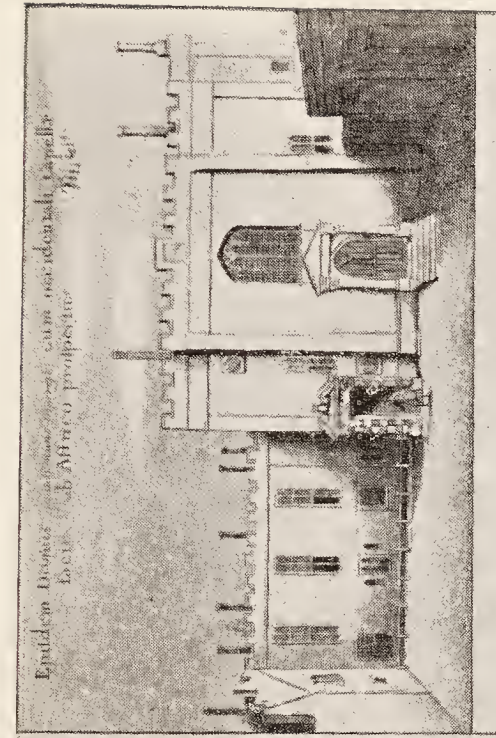
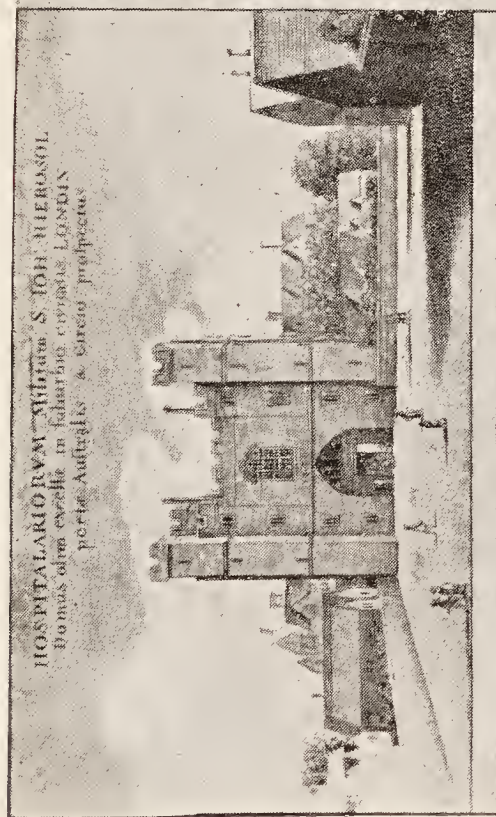
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small bricks—five to the foot, instead of four—which give so special a charm to Tudor and early Jacobean buildings, glow warm and mellow. The many ribs of the richly vaulted archway spring from a shaft in each of the angles, the central boss bearing an *Agnus Dei* upon a clasped book. While upon the four other bosses we see the arms of the Order on two, and those of Docwra on the others. Five shields originally decorated the south side of the Gate above the arch : but these were so badly decayed, that in 1903 they were replaced by the present shields and an inscription in memory of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, who was Sub-Prior of the Order at the time of his death. Happily, the three shields on the north side are in better preservation. The centre one is of the Order ; that on the left hand is Docwra's arms, with the Order in chief ; that on the right also Docwra's, " with the Order in chief, impaling a cross moline." While below we see traces of the date 1504.

The staircases in the two northern towers were originally spiral stairs of stone to the first floor, and then of wood. Of these only the western remains, the stone steps being replaced by oak ones. " In the east tower the original stair was replaced in the 17th century by a massive staircase with turned balusters and heavy newel posts, the inner walls being cut away to make room for it."*

On the ground floor, a heavy door on the right under the archway and one inside the east tower,

* Fincham, p. 48.



[Wenceslaus Hollar, 1656.]

The Priory of St John of Jerusalem, Clerkenwell.



[By H. W. Fincham, Esq.]

St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell.

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open into what was formerly the Guard room of the Priory ; now the admirable Library of the Order, with its handsome original ceiling with finely moulded ribs and its massive walls that defy time. A more delightful spot for quiet work it is difficult to imagine. For here we find gathered together a fine collection of books, pamphlets, prints and manuscripts relating to the Order. Among these latter is a facsimile of one of the earliest known—the “ Deed of St. Cross ”—an Agreement whereby the Order of St. John surrendered to the Bishop of Winchester the Hospital of St. Cross, Winchester ; dated Dover, 10th April, 1185, in the presence of Henry II., Eraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and others ; with the seals of Garnerius de Nablous (the Shechem of the Bible), Prior ; the Bishop of Winchester ; and Roger de Molins, Grand Master of the Hospitallers. The management of the Hospital of St. Cross, founded 1136, was entrusted to the Hospitallers. But owing to disputes with the Bishop, it was finally handed over by this agreement to Bishop Peter de Rupibus, who appointed Alan de Soke, “ a prudent and faithful man,” as its first Master.

Garnerius de Nablous was an important character. He was not only Prior of the Order in England from 1185 to 1190. But from documents found by Mr. Round at Rouen, we see that he was made Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers at Jerusalem, in December of that year, “ when we find him at Messina with Richard. Accompanying Richard from Sicily to Cyprus, he attested

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the settlement of Berengaria's dowry (May 12th, 1191) at Limasol; he successfully brought about the interview between Richard and the Emperor; and it was to him that Richard, in June, entrusted the Emperor as a captive."* And in the original French Itinerary of Richard (afterwards translated into Latin), we find him described on July 3rd, 1192, as :

“ Li meistre des Hospitaliers
Garniers, li curteis chevaliers.”

Another interesting facsimile, is that of the “ Grant of Indulgence from Brothers John Seyvill and William Hullis, of the Order of St. John, to William FitzHugh and his wife, as contributors to the re-fortifying of the Castle of Budrum, lately recaptured from the infidel.” Dated “ Clerkenwell Priory, 1414,” with the Seal of the Indulgence. Budrum being Halicarnassus, where, as already stated, the Knights' Castle still exists.†

Among the many treasures of the Library, such as beautiful vestments and embroideries, bindings, arms, prints, etc., is a collection of medals and coins of great interest. For as Rhodes and Malta were sovereign States, they had their own coinage in gold, silver and copper, from 1313 to 1798. And the silver and gold coins of the Knights remained the common currency of Malta until 1886, when British money replaced it.

On the medals the legends refer to some event,

* H. R. Round.

† See Chapter III.

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While the coins bear legends mostly scriptural, or some moral precept. A perfect specimen of La Valette's earliest gold zecchini has on the obverse St. John presenting the banner of the Order to the kneeling Grand Master, with M.I. ("Magister Ionnes"), and on the reverse the Saviour encircled by stars, and the legend: "DA MIHI VIRTUTEM CONTRA HOSTES TUO."

The legend on La Valette's first ducat is "SIT TIBI CHRISTE DICATUS REGIUS IST DUCATI" ("May this Royal ducat be dedicated to Christ").

On La Valette's three tari pieces is the fiery legend "SUB HOC SIGNO MILITAMUS."

While "NON AES SED FIDES" ("Not money but Trust"), is the quaint device on the copper coins of La Valette and his successors, with two joined hands on the obverse.

Later on, the reverse generally bore a shield with the arms of the Order quartered with those of the Grand Master, as in the very fine taris of G. M. Emmanuel Pinto. The inscription on the obverse, above Pinto's five crescents quartered with the Order on a shield, is "F. EMMANUEL PINTO, M.M.H.S., 1757" ("Magnus Magister Hospitalis Sancti"); and on the reverse the figure of St. John Baptist, with the legend floating from his Staff "NON SURREXIT MAIOR" ("None greater arose"). There are also ten scudi gold pieces of Emmanuel Pinto of 1756, with the same legend. His rule of thirty-two years was very profuse also in medals.

These medals, struck by the Knights of Malta from their first arrival in the island until their

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final dispersal by Napoleon, are of great historical importance. For they record the principal achievements of the Order. And the first series, struck by La Valette in honour of the defeat of the Turks at the famous siege and of the founding of Valetta, are of great beauty and deep interest.*

Another case contains the many varieties of the gold and enamel crosses of the Knights, the eight-pointed white cross bearing the gold lion and unicorn in the four corners since 1800 ; while those before that date can always be distinguished by the four gold fleurs-de-lys instead. In the same case is the baton of the Grand Falconer of Malta, an important official of the Order, who was responsible for the yearly tribute of a falcon to the King of Spain. It was presented by General Sir Lintorn Simonds, formerly Governor of Malta, and is a solid rounded ivory handle, tapering to the slender gilt-bronze top, on which a double ball bears a bronze falcon—though we must honestly admit that it is more like a swan than the fierce, proud bird of prey.

Among other objects of special interest is a fine repoussé silver-gilt rose-water dish, representing a wounded Knight attended by an angel and amorini. And a Spanish silver-gilt chalice, “ said to have been brought to England by King Philip when he came to marry Queen Mary.” It is now used at the Holy Communion of Members of the Order in the Crypt on St. John Baptist Day.

While fine old pharmacy jars of Rhodian ware

* See Chapter V.

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from the hospitals of Rhodes and Malta, with cannon balls from the siege of Malta, adorn the tops of the bookcases.

The 17th century staircase opposite the inner door of the Library, leads to the Chancery on the second floor of the eastern tower. And here, besides the chimney-piece already mentioned, are a number of most interesting water-colour drawings of 17th and 18th century sea-fights between the Knights of Malta and the Turks and Corsairs. In one, the long, red, snake-like galleys of the Knights, with furled lateen sails and two masts bearing the banner of the Order, are sinking two huge Tripolitan galleons in 1608. In another a squadron of three Algerian Corsairs are attacked by the Knights in 1736, their red cross on the white ground contrasting bravely with the white crescent on red. There are captures of Algerian Corsairs off Lampedosa in 1729 ; of Tunisian Corsairs off the Morea, 1706. A sea-fight with the Turks off Greece, 1603. And a capture of Turkish war vessels off Corinth in 1611. These, and many others, were given to the Order by the Librarian, Mr. Edmund Fraser, Knight of Justice, in 1907.

Besides these, a number of valuable and most interesting 18th-century coloured prints of the Fortifications of Malta, give one a very complete idea of their strength and disposition, up to the time of the dissolution of the Order by Napoleon.

And lastly, from the window of the Chancery a vision of the dome of St. Paul's, takes one by

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surprise at the end of the vista of St. John's Lane, as one then realizes how much higher Clerkenwell stands than the City of London.

On the same floor as the Chancery we reach the large room over the archway—now the Council Chamber, which was in all probability the Guest Hall, and therefore the scene of Henry VIII.'s meeting with Grand Master de l'Isle Adam, and also of Garrick's early appearance in *The Mad Doctor*. The flat ceiling which disfigured the Gate House when used as an inn, has been happily replaced by an open-timbered roof. And from its south window we again get a delightful glimpse of the dome of St. Paul's beyond the ugly houses of St. John's Lane. In the west tower, which communicates with the Council Chamber, the chief room is that of the Secretary-General on the third floor; while the other rooms in both towers are used by the various departments of the Order.

The enormous growth and increasing importance of the work of the Order and its departments, since it gained full possession of the Gate House in 1887, soon necessitated further accommodation. And the large building on the south side was erected in 1903, from the designs of Mr. John Oldrid Scott, which are most happily in keeping with the old building it joins. It is faced with the same Kentish ragstone as the Gate, "with square-headed mullioned windows for the ground and first floor, and four large traceried windows to the hall on the second floor." Through the

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entrance gateway the ambulances enter; and the rest of the ground floor is a great store for ambulance material, a spot humming with activity in these days. The first floor is devoted to offices and a lecture or drill hall. While the Chapter Hall, a fine and lofty room on the second floor, covers the whole of the new building; its principal entrance being through the charming old Chancery. The shields on the pendentives of the roof bear the arms of the different Langues of the Order. The glass of the lantern contains the armorial bearings of the King and nobles of England, who helped to rebuild the English Tower of Budrum in 1414.* While the cornice below bears thirty-two shields of the Grand Priors of St. John's, Clerkenwell.

Many of the interesting portraits of Grand Masters and Knights of the Order were brought from Malta by Sir Victor Houlton, G.C.M.G., when Chief Secretary in the island. And among them are two fine French portraits of Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan, 1775–1797, who was Grand Master of Malta during the French Revolution, before Hompesch who surrendered to Napoleon. Grand Master Emmanuel Pinto, 1742, hangs over the fine mantelpiece, with the charming and gentle saint, Ubaldesca, in her black habit, on one side, and the historian of the Order, l'Abbé Vertot, on the other. Other good portraits are those of the conchologist A. J. Delsallier d'Argenville, 1680–1765, a Knight of the Order, the various

* See Chapter III.

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shells on the table beside him showing his favourite pursuit. And another most interesting portrait is that of Sir Andrew Wyse, Grand Prior of England in Malta from 1593 to 1631. While a new acquisition is the full-length portrait of a gallant young cup-bearer of the Order in trunk hose and embroidered vest.

Beside the carved throne of the Grand Prior under the north window, stands a beautiful silver Processional Cross. It is an admirable specimen of early Italian Renaissance work in repoussé silver, with the eight-pointed Cross of the Order behind the figure of Our Lord. A shield at the foot with a lion rampant, is that of the Lord Prior Sir Robert Mallory, 1433–1440, who dedicated a chapel in Clerkenwell to St. Katherine, St. Ursula and St. Margaret in 1433. It was bequeathed to the Order by Sir Edmund Lechmere, who discovered it on the Continent. And it is now carried at the head of great processions of the Knights—such as that on January 11th, 1918, at the Thanksgiving Service for the capture of Jerusalem—just as it must have been carried over three hundred years ago.

CHAPTER XII

THE ENGLISH ORDER AND ITS WORK TO-DAY

AFTER the final dispersal of the Order in Malta by Napoleon in 1798, the European war seems to have prevented any concerted action on the part of the scattered Knights for some twenty years.

But the massacre of the Christians in Scio during the war between Turkey and Greece, which eventually led to the liberation of Greece, moved European feeling so profoundly, that the remaining "French Knights resident in Paris determined to see if it was not possible to reconstitute the Order as a militant body to fight in aid of the Christians."* They proposed an elaborate scheme, having a mercantile branch as well, to help in wars against the Turks, thus imitating the original founders of the Order—the Merchant Knights of Amalfi. The document they drew up, invokes the help of the English; "and states that at that time, although the Chapter of the Order could not be summoned, there was in France the Venerable Ordinary Council of the Order, in which

* The late Dr. Edwin Freshfield, Receiver-General of the Order, 1909.

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were represented sufficient of the Langues to carry by a majority of the Chapter any determination arrived at, had it been possible to summon a Chapter; and *the Venerable Ordinary Council then re-established the English branch of the Order*, prescribing that the members of the Order might be members of the Church of England.”*

Steps were at once taken by the remaining English Knights to revive the Order in England under Queen Mary's Charter, which, as has been already shown, had never been revoked. And proceedings took place in the English Law Courts with that intent. “The Revolution in France, however, again dispersed the Knights, and the small fraction of that body that had taken up its headquarters in Rome, declined to acknowledge the action of the Venerable Ordinary Council, and the Roman Knights have never since accepted the English branch of the Order; but from the date of our re-foundation by the Council, the Order has continued its existence in England,”* though as a voluntary institution, according to English law.

The whole matter, however, was set at rest once and for all, as far as the English Order is concerned, by Queen Victoria, who, in 1878, granted a fresh Charter to the Order, giving the voluntary body, formed by the Knights, a status and constitution founded upon the actual Charter of Queen Mary.

* Dr. Edwin Freshfield.

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“ The Charter of Queen Victoria, as the Charter of Queen Mary had done, has revived the mediæval Corporation of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England, which has been recognized as the English Order from the time of King Edward II. until the time of Henry VIII.”*

While the continuity of handing down the Accolade of the Order, was preserved through its Honorary Bailiff, the late Sir Edward G. L. Perrott, Bart., who died in 1886. For he received the Accolade from Sir J. C. Meredyth, Bart., G.C.J.J., who had in turn received it from the last Grand Master of the Order, Ferdinand von Hompesch, who fled to Russia from Malta when Napoleon took that island.

The constitution of the English Order to-day is as follows :

The Sovereign is its Sovereign Head and Patron, without whose sanction no admission can be made to it.

The Grand Prior holds office for an unlimited time ; being at present H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, elected in 1910.

The Sub-Prior, now Right Honourable The Earl of Plymouth, C.B., comes next in the Order and acts as the Grand Prior's deputy.

Next to him is the Bailiff of Egle, now Colonel Sir Herbert Perrott, Bt., C.B.

The other grades of the Order are Knights and Ladies of Justice ; Knights and Ladies of Grace ;

* *Id.*

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Esquires ; Serving Brothers and Sisters ; and attached to it, though not members of the Order, are Honorary Associates and Donats.

The executive officers of the Order to-day are :
Prelate : The Archbishop of York.

Chancellor : Colonel Sir Herbert Jekyll, K.C.M.G.

Receiver-General : Right Honourable Evelyn Cecil, M.P.

Director of the Ambulance Department : Right Honourable Earl of Ranfurly, G.C.M.G.

Chairman of the British Ophthalmic Hospital, Jerusalem : (vacant)

Almoner : Sir Dyce Duckworth, Bart., M.D., LL.D.

Librarian : Edmund Fraser, Esq.

Registrar : Right Honourable Lord Claud Hamilton, M.P.

Genealogist and Director of Ceremonies : Sir Alfred S. Scott-Gatty, K.C.V.O. (Garter).

Secretary : William R. Edwards, Esq., O.B.E., A.C.A.

The members of the Order, daily increasing in strength, now number approximately as follows :

Knights of Justice	70
Ladies of Justice	50
Knights of Grace	400
Ladies of Grace	200
Chaplains	22
Esquires	100
Hon. Serving Brothers	400

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Hon. Serving Sisters 200

Hon. Associates (Men and Women) 450

These last are not Members of the Order, and instead of the white enamelled cross of the Order, wear a silver cross.

THE BRITISH OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL IN JERUSALEM

In the foregoing list of the executive of the Order, the Chairman of the British Ophthalmic Hospital is mentioned. And before we touch on the great work of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem since 1877, we must turn for a moment to the East once more. For with the growth of the revived English Langue, a desire arose among its members to carry on its work in the Holy City of its origin. Therefore it came about that on July 7th, 1882, friends and members of the Order met in the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster Abbey—a place of happy augury for the work—where a resolution was passed :

“ That this meeting cordially approves of the proposal made by the English Langue of the Order of St. John, to establish a British Hospice and Ophthalmic Dispensary at Jerusalem, and, recognizing this object as being at once humanitarian and national, recommends it to the hearty support of the public.”

A Committee of Members and Associates of the Order was at once appointed. So admirable an object touched the imagination of many people

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unconnected with the Order. Money therefore quickly came in. And on December 4th, 1882, Dr. J. C. Waddell began work on temporary premises in the City of Jerusalem.

In February of the following year, the late Sir Edmund and Lady Lechmere, who had been most active in the foundation of the Hospital, and were among its chief benefactors, went to Jerusalem. And in an interesting account of his visit, Sir Edmund stated "that it had been a long-cherished wish of the English Langue of the Order to have a home in the earliest and chief town of the Order. Where . . . England was the only great European power unrepresented in Jerusalem in the cause of charity *unconnected* with missionary or proselytizing work."

For, as he clearly showed, the great merit of the British Hospice was that it was absolutely unsectarian, and that its services were offered to the members of every race and creed, without the slightest interference with their religious opinions or duties.

The Turkish authorities became quickly convinced of this cosmopolitan and non-proselytizing character of the hospital. And thanks to the influence of the late King Edward—then Prince of Wales and Grand Prior of the Order—the Sultan gave a firman, not only authorizing the Order to open a hospital, but presenting it with a piece of land, and permission to buy more.

"Sir Edmund Lechmere assisted in the purchase of the property, on which there was a Turkish

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house built of the best description of stone, with eighteen rooms ; ” and this has been greatly added to. It stands in an admirable position, upon a rocky eminence abutting on the road to Bethlehem, ten minutes’ walk from the city, overlooking the Valley of Hinnom with its olive trees, and with a fine view of Mount Sion. Many additions of importance were made—such as a second operation room, which was added just before the war—and many more were planned as being greatly needed. Among them a Khan, or rest house, for friends of the patients, which are usual in Indian hospitals. But all work was arrested by the war.

Among the skilled and devoted physicians who have ministered to the patients since the Hospital was opened, Dr. and Mrs. Cant worked there for some twenty-three years until 1911. They were succeeded by Mr. D. Heron, who remained in charge until September, 1914.

From a very small beginning, the fame of the Hospital soon became widely known throughout the East. Patients made enormous journeys, often on foot. And, to quote Mr. Edwards, secretary of the Order, “ the many personal anecdotes which reach St. John’s Gate bring home to one the pathetic regard and even affection which the Asiatic peoples have for its Hospital. A Bedouin from the Sinai Peninsula had his sight restored at the Hospital and spread its fame abroad. Three men afflicted in the same way as this Bedouin had been, heard of the success which had attended his visit, and obtaining the

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good offices of a relative as their guide, started on the long and toilsome journey of fourteen days to reach the Hospital, where they had to be detained rather longer than usual, but were able eventually to return in full possession of their sight."

In one year 1,262 in-patients were treated, with 9,600 out-patients. Some idea, therefore, may be formed of the loss to these poor, suffering people, when, in the autumn of 1914, Mr. Heron was forced to leave, owing to the hostility of the German-ridden Turkish authorities. And we may realize the relief it must be to them to know that the Hospital is once more in English hands. Though, alas! for the present it cannot be used. For at the capture of Jerusalem by General Allenby, it was found that the building had been used by the Turks as a munition store, and the greater part of it was blown up by them when they evacuated Jerusalem.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71—which brought the Geneva Red Cross movement prominently before the civilized world—inspired our Order with fresh energy. And numbers of its members joined the newly formed British National Aid Society for Red Cross work. But experience showed that no society could be really efficient in war if it were not thoroughly organized in time of peace. This conviction led to the institution of a work wholly due to the Order of St. John—a work whose value to all classes of the com-

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munity, in peace as well as in war, has proved inestimable.

This was the inauguration in 1877 of the St. John Ambulance Association. The object of this Association was to train men and women—nay, even boys and girls—in First Aid to the wounded. We can look back now with complacent amusement to the jeers and laughter with which such an idea was greeted. We can even remember an accident in a Warwickshire hunting field, when the first words of the injured man on recovering consciousness, were: “For heaven’s sake don’t let one of those Ambulance women touch me!” But we have also seen with profound satisfaction how prejudice and contemptuous jokes have given place to gratitude, on the part of millions of sufferers who have been succoured by the contemptible “First Aider.” For it should be remembered that the Association insisted on the important principle that the First Aid pupil was not to endeavour to *cure* an injury, but to use his intelligence in acting rapidly, and improvising any means at hand to prevent the injury becoming worse *until the doctor arrives*.

All this can be seen in the admirably simple text-books published by the Order at St. John’s Gate, such as Sir James Cantlie’s “First Aid to the Injured,” the authorized text-book of the First Aid course, which should be at hand in every house in the Empire in case of accidents. A million and a half have been circulated of this

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invaluable little book: while translations have been made in many languages and even dialects.

The first centres of the St. John Ambulance Association were started in 1877. And Woolwich has the honour of being the very first. This good example was quickly followed by other centres in London and the Provinces. In 1878, the collieries, especially those in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, recognized the immense value of such a movement and took it up with enthusiasm. The police, of course, received special attention in training, with what admirable results everyone knows. While the importance of the work of First Aid on railways led to the first class for railway servants being opened in the same year.

A further development soon took place. For the First Aid students quickly saw the value of co-operation among themselves. Ambulance Corps were formed in many parts of the country. And these scattered Corps in turn became a nucleus which in 1887 developed into the St. John Ambulance Brigade, "with the object of co-ordinating as a national institution the local efforts of the various Ambulance Corps."*

Among the Colonies, New Zealand was the first to form Brigade units in 1892. And the Association spread rapidly in Australia, Egypt, New Zealand, India, Burma, Ceylon, Newfoundland, Gibraltar, Malta, South Africa, West Indies, Canada, Nova Scotia, Hong Kong, Tasmania,

* W. R. Edwards, Esq., O.B.E., Secretary to the Order of St. John.

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Singapore, and numbers many thousand members overseas.

The ranks of the St. John Ambulance Brigade are open to all men who hold the First Aid certificate, and to all women who hold the First Aid and Nursing certificates of the Association. The Headquarters are at St. John's Gate. And for purposes of organization it is divided into twelve districts. Of these, eleven are in England and Wales; the twelfth comprising the whole of Ireland.* Each district has its Deputy-Commissioner and other officers, with corps and subdivisions distributed throughout the various counties it comprises.

In September, 1916†(the report for 1917 is not yet out), the total strength of the twelve divisions was : Ambulance (men), 43,277; Nursing (women), 19,574—total 62,851. And to show how greatly the value of the Association is appreciated, in that one year the personnel of the Brigade increased by nearly 10,000 members; having “nearly trebled its strength since the outbreak of the war.”†

It is indeed difficult to over-estimate the magnificent work that the St. John Ambulance Brigade has done and is doing.

At the beginning of the century it had so developed “that it was able to send 2,000 members on active service as Hospital Orderlies attached to the R.A.M.C. in the South African and Chinese

* Scotland has a separate association of St. Andrew.

† Report of the Chief Commissioner, 1916.

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Wars.”* While in the present war, 17,000 men were sent out as Hospital Orderlies in 1915 alone. The numbers now employed in Naval, Military and Private Hospitals at home and abroad being 22,279.

Mr. Edwards, Knight of Justice, the devoted Secretary of the Order, gives an interesting example of the prompt preparedness of the Brigade. For he relates that “late on the Saturday night of August 1st, 1914, when war seemed imminent, the Admiralty asked for Naval Sick Berth Orderlies, and on Sunday morning over 100 marched off fully equipped to take up their duties, and by Tuesday 4,000 men were at their posts on board ship and in Naval and Military Hospitals.” Further, he says, “An officer reported how a train of wounded arrived in Boulogne with 240 cases, of which 170 were on stretchers, and many others unable to walk. There was a squad of 40 Brigade men from Newcastle in attendance, *who a few days before had been working in coal mines.* These men removed the whole 240 cases from the train to the Hospital Ship, and in 40 minutes they were on their way to England.”†

“The Voluntary Aid Detachments, commonly known now by the kindly and almost affectionate name of V.A.D.’s—to whom, indeed, all honour and gratitude is due in these tremendous days of war—were originally founded in 1909, to provide bodies of men and women to supplement the

* Edwards.

† *Id.*

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personnel of the Territorial forces. The St. John Ambulance Association joined this movement; large numbers of its members joining the detachments as recruits. And, on the outbreak of war in 1914, the wisdom and value of this movement were instantly demonstrated. For the Voluntary Aid Detachments were at once called upon to augment the medical units of the regular forces, in the vast number of hospitals and convalescent homes which sprang up to meet the overwhelming demands. At the end of July, 1915, there were 198 men's detachments belonging to the Order of St. John, with a strength of 8,107; and 505 detachments of women, numbering 14,572. These numbers have increased up to the present time. So that there are 944 detachments of 33,285 men and women now engaged.* And noble work have they done at home and abroad, whether they wear the White Cross of St. John on its black ground or the Red Cross of Geneva.

The number of St. John Hospitals registered at St. John's Gate is 270. Of these, on April 1st, 1918, 254 were in working order; for some close from time to time and reopen again. And during the month of March, 1918, 67 St. John Hospitals in this country were supplied with 131,038 articles of requisites and comforts. While 6,150 articles were sent from the Gate to the Joint Stores of the

* The above numbers only apply to the Order of St. John, which includes St. John Ambulance Association and St. John Ambulance Brigade.

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British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John, Pall Mall. Besides these hospitals, St. John's Gate supplies nurses and requisites to :

The Naval Hospital, Southend.

Six Military Hospitals in or near London, *i.e.*, Charing Cross ; City of London, Clapton ; St. Bartholomew's ; Herne Bay ; Metropolitan, Kingsland Road ; French War Emergency.

And the great St. John Ambulance Brigade Hospital at Étaples.

The requisites sent to these various hospitals in March included—thanks to the generous help of various friends—a large new sterilizer, costing £26. Another asked for an electrical vibrator for the massage room, which was promptly sent. An irrigator for burns ; surgical chairs ; a large dressing trolley ; and arm-chairs were also dispatched. While the last available cheap offer of blankets or rugs was secured—one of the greatest needs at this moment, as some hospitals are unable to procure any blankets in the ordinary market.

The supplies from all quarters during March, 1918, received and sent out from St. John's Gate are as follows :

	<i>Garments.</i>	<i>Articles.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Received during the month	11,531	101,592	113,123
Sent out during the month	13,038	124,150	137,188
Received since 1914	806,129	3,555,942	4,362,071
Sent out since 1914	705,227	3,312,665	4,017,892
Stock in warehouse	100,902	243,277	344,179

THE ENGLISH ORDER AND ITS WORK

Supplies come in generously from the many working parties throughout the Kingdom and from far lands overseas. For at our last visit to the Warehouse, great cases from New Zealand, which are sent in a steady stream, were standing ready to be unpacked. Welcome and admirable cases from the Surgical Dressing Co., New York, had just arrived. And the faithful Park Lane Depot had sent in its weekly consignment of valuable gifts of clothing and dressings. While it is pointed out that in spite of the difficulties—which increase now every month—of obtaining materials, the St. John Ambulance Warehouse has “so far nothing to complain of, either as regards amount or quality of contributions sent in.”

For, when war fell upon the world in August, 1914, the Order of St. John was not only ready, as we have seen, with active help in Ambulance and Nursing work : but prepared to utilize the services of those who, from age or other reasons, were unable to give themselves to such employment. A call was made for help from workers in every country where the St. John Ambulance Association was known. A noble response came at once, and gifts of every requisite for wounded and sick began to flow into the Warehouse in St. John's Square. Among the many active centres of help, almost the first was the West End Depot of St. John Ambulance Association, started, thanks to Lady Grosvenor, at 35, Park Lane, which is entirely self-supporting. No record of its work was kept

THE ENGLISH ORDER AND ITS WORK

till July, 1915. But from that date to April, 1918, the following list will give an idea of the results, where some thirty or more ladies are working every day :

Made garments.....	2,983
Bandages	27,129
Knitted articles	2,613
Swabs and dressings.....	64,434
Miscellaneous articles	1,681

This merely represents the work of one small depot and its correspondents in the country. While hundreds of registered Work Parties and Home Workers are affiliated to the Order, supplying St. John Ambulance Warehouse with every description of work.

The Gate is a busy place from morning to night in these days of storm and stress, and each visit there fills one with fresh and yet deeper admiration for its many activities and for its amazing organization. For all goes on quietly, without fuss or haste. All queries are answered as if there was nothing else to be done—all necessities are dispatched without a moment's delay.

In the large store on the ground-floor of the new building, close to the doors where the big ambulances stand ever ready, men are packing the canvas-covered wicker cases with every requisite from splints, lint, bandages, special tourniquets and drainers, to the neat bottles of boric powder, sal-volatile, iodine, and all needful for the surgeon's

THE ENGLISH ORDER AND ITS WORK

emergency work, or filling the smaller First Aid cases. Here we see splints of every description, crutches, Furley stretchers, and light-wheeled litters, from the woodwork shops of the Order at Ashford, and a hundred other comforts prepared for dispatch.

But even more interesting is the "Warehouse" across St. John's Square, where Lady Jekyll and the band of devoted ladies, who give their whole time to the work, spend every day receiving, sorting and sending out the vast quantities of hospital requisites which arrive ceaselessly. Everything is put up in bundles of five or ten. For here decimals are the order of the day. One floor is devoted to mountains of shirts of all sorts and pyjamas. Another to woollen garments to meet every need, dressing-gowns and jackets. Higher up the steep old stairs are blankets, now becoming one of the rarest and most precious things needful, with sheets, towels and pillows. While in the attic are special comforts—soap, writing materials, tooth and hair brushes, boot laces and braces—so grateful to men in hospital, who often have to use a bit of string to replace them—books and games, and even cigarettes and tobacco. In one corner on the first-floor on my last visit in April stood a pile of beautifully made crutches and bed-rests, which are sent monthly from a depot in Jersey, with many other requisites; until six months ago the workers had never made such things. And sent with these are admirably carpentered

THE ENGLISH ORDER AND ITS WORK

bed-tables, made by a set of boys there, who asked for a pattern so that they too might help.

In the next old house a room has been acquired for the countless numbers and endless variety of bandages, swabs and dressings—a snow-white room, all hung and covered with white sheets to keep the delicate white dressings and bandages as fresh and clean as when they arrive.

As soon as a demand comes and the required numbers are made up, the Brigade men below pack and dispatch to our home hospitals, to Étaples, or those in Malta—the home of the Order—Palestine, Mesopotamia, or India. While, for sudden emergencies, a case or two, ready packed, are always standing prepared to send off at a moment's notice.

THE ST. JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE HOSPITAL, ÉTAPLES

One of the chief works of the Order since the outbreak of war in 1914—a work of which all its members are justly proud—is the great hut Hospital at Étaples, known as the St. John Ambulance Brigade Hospital, for whose equipment and maintenance the Order raised a fund of £75,000.

All travellers to Paris know that line of sand dunes lying between Boulogne and the great estuary where the Conche slides into the Channel at Étaples. Here, overlooking the broad stretches of the tide-river, the little white town of huts for nearly 600 suffering men has been built, under the

THE ENGLISH ORDER AND ITS WORK

most perfect sanitary conditions of sandy soil, healing freshness of pine trees and pure sea air. And those who have helped in this noble work have the satisfaction of knowing from the highest authority that the St. John Ambulance Brigade Hospital is considered to be possibly the best in France.

In admirably built huts, equipped with the very latest appliances, are beds for between five and six hundred patients. The staff consists of 19 officers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Trimble, C.M.G., L.R.C.P. Edin., a Matron, an Assistant Matron, 53 trained sisters, and 24 V.A.D.'s, assisted by a Provisional Company of R.A.M.C., composed of St. John Ambulance men, enlisted for the duration of the war, with a strength of 141 of all ranks. There are Pathological, X-ray, Dental and Electro-Cardiograph departments; two finely equipped Operating Theatres; Dispensary; and ice and soda-water making machinery; while the entire Hospital, including the Provisional Company of R.A.M.C. men, is fed from one large kitchen.

One has only to look at photographs of the gay flower-garden in the spacious quadrangle, of scores of sick and wounded men sitting or lying in the shady galleries and the covered ways that connect the wards, while the Australian band plays in the hot sunshine, or the long white wards, with the white eight-pointed cross on its black ground upon the coverlid of each bed, to see what a haven of mercy has been prepared for our soldiers.

THE ENGLISH ORDER AND ITS WORK

It is a sure token that the ancient Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem continues its beneficent work of tending sick and wounded soldiers, aided by every appliance that the wonders of modern science can produce, as did its Knights Hospitallers over seven hundred years ago in Palestine.

THE END

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
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